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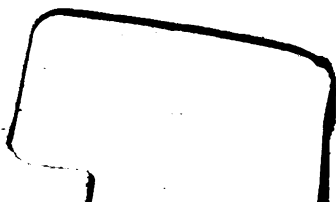
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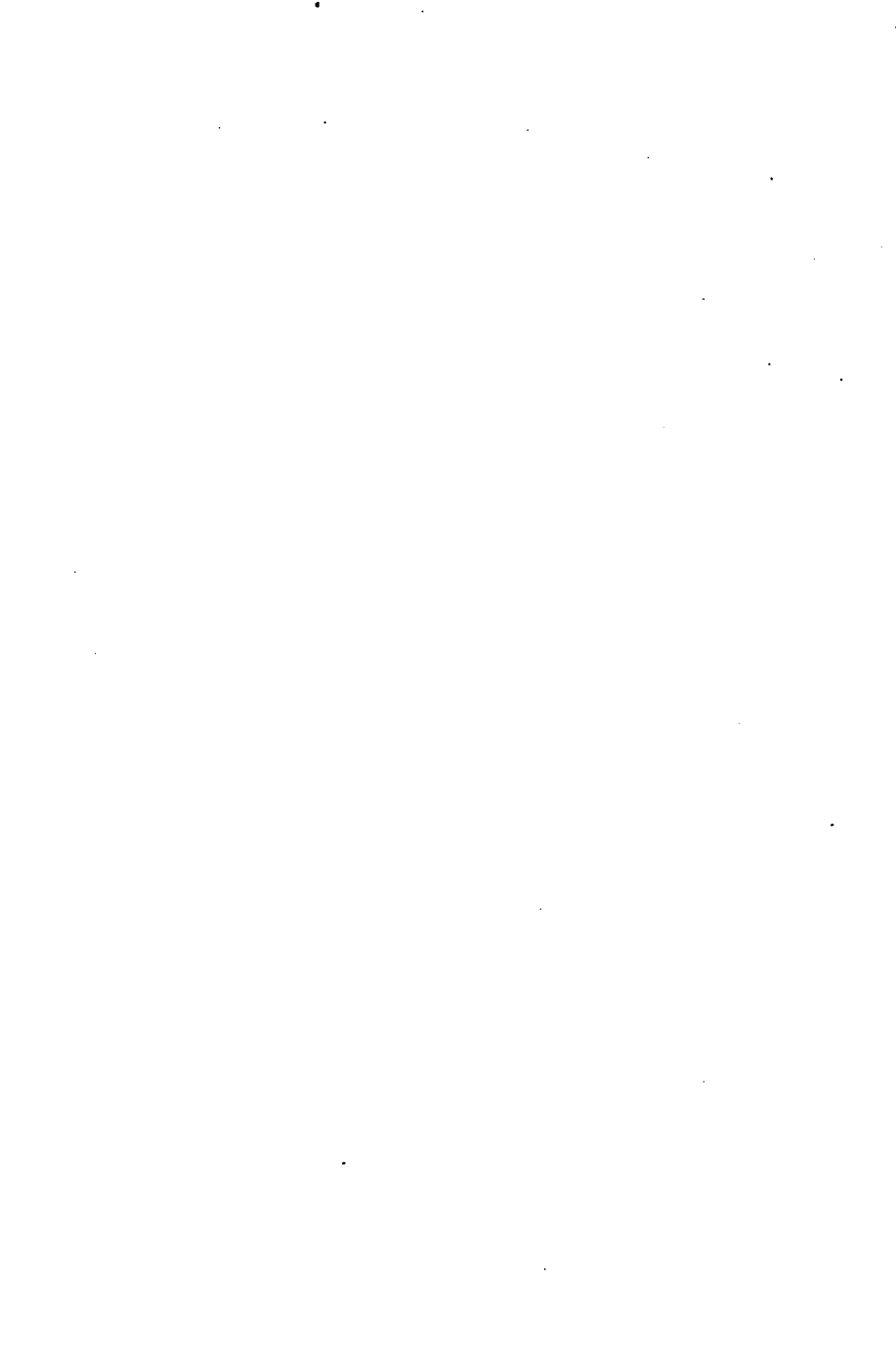
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SONGS
FROM AN ATTIC

BY
JOHN ERNEST McCANN



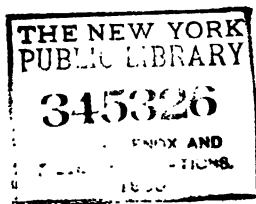
BRENTANO'S

PARIS
CHICAGO

NEW YORK

LONDON
WASHINGTON

1890



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BY JOHN ERNEST McCANN.

PRESS OF F. V. STRAUSS,
120-126 WALKER ST., N. Y.

*To two who will understand :
One, above, and one below.
They will stand on either hand,
I know.*

*And one above far out will lean,
To guide and warn by saintly signs;
And one below will read between
The lines.*

July, 1890.

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SONGS FROM AN ATTIC.

BY

JOHN ERNEST McCANN.

BROOKE.

I knew and loved, believed in, Brooke,
As we did in a favorite book
When we were boys, and life was June,
And morning, noon and afternoon,
The whole year round. I'll tell you why :
Because a devil in each eye
Smiled out at one from 'neath his brows,
Like wantons in a mad carouse ;
Because his muscles were like wire ;
Because his heart was big and red ;
Because, like yon cathedral's spire,
His matchless figure matched his head !
Because his face and mind were cut
By Nature in her happiest mood ;
And he knew fear—was reckless—but,
He never flinched—was never rude.

Fine raiment always found his back,
And lilies blossomed in his coat.
Although his purse at times (alack !)
Was rather lean, and cash remote,
He never lost his airy, gay
Mode of flashing down Broadway,
And making damsels' bright eyes—pop !
So *debonair* he was ! Such dash !
And, oh, the curves to his moustache !
No wonder envy called him "fop" !

Fop, perhaps he was ; but man
 He surely was—and gentleman—
 Upon the stage, upon Broadway—
 Down to his sad and latest day ;
 In bearing, heart, soul, voice and look,
 Dame Nature's masterpiece was Brooke !

You'd never think, to see him play
 Don Cæsar, that his heart was gray ;
 Nor ever dream, to see him dance,
 And hear him sing, or watch him prance,
 That he had had his sad romance.

He never tried to win her heart.
 He loved his freedom and his art
 Too well, to give one up, or woo
 A heart instead of Art. He knew
 How jealous Art is of a new
 And handsome mistress. So, he fled,
 And left her writhing—almost dead.

What handsome woman's ever balked ?
 They, only, knew, and neither talked.
 And then, in some mysterious way,
 She crept into his arms one day.
 And then, by woman's will and might,
 She filled my brave Brooke's heart, one night,
 With love—so glorious—nay, divine !—
 That all his soul was steeped in wine !
 And when his heart was in her hand—
 When every drop in that heart gushed
 To kiss the fingers he had spanned—
 She flung it from her ! bleeding ! crushed !
 And into endless night Brooke rushed.

Oh, irony of cruel fate !
 To make dead hearts beat on—endure
 A hell of trusts betrayed—and hate ! * * *
 That night, Brooke played the tortured Moor !
 'Twas on the bills ; he needs must play—
 They could not turn that house away.
 Voices here and there : " What art ! "
 " He does not play—he lives—the part ! "
 " Just see the tears roll from his eyes ! "

"My God ! what moans, and groans, and sighs !"
"The man is mad—or else divine !"
"Thank God, Othello's fate's not mine !"

That night unmade and made him, quite.
He played the long engagement out ;
Was seen on Broadway every day—
Filled the theatre every night—
The woman ? She had turned—devout !
He told me all. I, only, knew.
What he knew—she knew—I tell you.

Well, we steamed through the Golden Gate,
For Melbourne, one fair day in May.
He did so wish to get away—
To give his soul a bath. All hate,
And passion—all but love and grief—
Had left him, quite, with "Time, the thief."

Fair winds and balmy turned to foul,
One night, beneath a tropic sky.
A moan, a growl, and then a howl—
And hell was loose ! From far on high
Came topmasts, rigging, blocks and chains,
And we went plunging to domains
I never saw before—nor since :
And through it all Brooke was a prince !
He quieted mothers, children hushed—
This way, that way, all ways, rushed !
Helped cut away the masts, that came
Down, as upward leaped a flame !
The smokestack ? No ! look ! higher and higher !
The noble "Bayard" was afire !

Out boats ! out rafts ! preservers get !
And all the while leaped higher yet
The awful flames, and smoke, and roar—
And Brooke, more princely than before !
He stood there, with a pistol cocked,
Beside the officers, and blocked
Many a selfish little trick
To board the boats. Each little chick,
And then the mothers, fathers, crew—
The officers, and then, Brooke—you !

He would not leave till all were in.
 The storm was over—but the din !
 Each raft was loaded—every boat,
 And then Brooke went to get—*his coat* !
 We had to lower. I could but think :
 “ Another here, or there, we sink ! ”
 Brooke knew it, too. I heard my name,
 And saw him, through the smoke and flame,
 Dressed in his best Prince Albert—game !

“ Good-by, dear boy ! ” I heard him say—
 “ She’s sinking ! sinking ! get away !
 You could not float if I went down
 Among you there ; so, I must drown.
 Be good to all, and your sweetheart—
 Through life to you a pleasant path ;
 I’ve had my fling—I’ve played my part,
 And, now, I’ll give my soul a bath.”

Two Bayards went down. In the Doomsday Book,
 Bayard the MAN will be written—BROOKE.

TO A MAY FLOWER.

Just a breath of lilacs, blowing through the crowded pit ;
 Just a morning glory, we observe from where we sit ;
 Just a bud or blossom, from a youthful apple tree,
 In some dim New England orchard—pink and free !

Just a little maiden, with the sunlight in her hair ;
 Just a little lady, with a sweet, patrician air ;
 Just a little woman, walking in a wholesome breeze,
 With a rose-strewn path before you—if you please !

Just a tiny shallop, floating down beneath fair skies ;
 Just a May-time flower, with two sonnets in her eyes ;
 Just (if you will listen, you may hear) a voice that calls,
 As your shallop cuts Life’s river : “ ‘Ware the falls ! ”

MY HEART'S LIKE AN ARDENT ROSE.

My heart's like an ardent rose
That blows in the morning light,
And droops at the long day's close,
And pants through the breathless night.
Through the worlds that divide us, sweet,
Like the tide at my feet, it sighs,
And it never stops till its ruby drops
Gush up to your rainbow eyes !

You know not its nights and days ;
You know not its hopes and fears ;
You know not the blind, dumb ways
It has groped through the sorry years ;
But you know that my sun and star
Glow over your bower there,
That my soul would sin to be buried in
The world of your amber hair !

You might feel my heart, were you dead,
Beating over your royal breast—
Where only a Dante's head
Should presume to seek a nest !
No Dante am I, and yet—
My soul from the darkness slips,
To lie at your feet, and in anguish beat,
Till it melts on your flaming lips !

DESOLATION.

I.

A world of ice up in the Arctic sea,
That stretches leagues, and leagues, and leagues away;
Into the grave of Night the dying Day
Is slowly lowered ; winds and shadows flee
Beyond a man, who, standing like a tree,
When tempests make it quiver, moan and sway—
Gazes, fur-clad, down through the cold and gray,
Awaiting Fate's implacable decree.

Nothing that breathes between him and the sky ;
 Nothing that moves across the icy space ;
 Deserted as a desert in a drouth
 Is that vast plain ; the winds go sighing by ;
 The day is almost dead ; and still his face
 Is turned with famished eyes towards the South.

II.

A summer night, up from the city's heart ;
 A grand piano from a distant room
 Sends one of Mozart's dreamings through the gloom,
 Just as the last rays of the sun depart.
 The fireflies through the morning glories dart ;
 The roses in the garden breathe perfume ;
 At intervals is heard the dying boom
 Of traffic in the far, barbaric mart.

There, at a window, one sad woman dreams
 Of him who held her sweet face to his breast
 Before he to the Arctic world went forth.
 "So long ago it was," she sighs, while gleams
 A teardrop down the cheek he's oft caressed
 From a soul in eyes turned ever to the North.

HONEY LOVE.

 [ANTE-BELLUM DAYS.]

Honey love, Honey love, doan' cher hear me callin' fur you,
 Down here in de cl'arin', by de cabins, near de corn ?
 Doan' cher know my heart is loaded up with grief en' fallen
 fur you
 Eber since de highes' bidder lef' me all forlorn ?
 W'en he said, " I'll take de gal,
 En' here's de money says I will ! "
 I saw you sway jes' like a branch ob lilacs, 'en turn pale ;
 W'en he said, " I'll make de gal
 Stop w'imp'rin', or her blood I'll spill ! "
 In my heart I heard de warble ob er dyin' nightingale.

Honey love, Honey love, de days is so much longer now,
 En' nights doan' seem to go erway like once dey uster pass,
 En' care en' grief, instead ob growin' light, is growin' stronger
 now,

'Cause I neber hear you sing en' laugh at moonlight in de
 grass.

If my Honey's in de world

It's hard fur me to realize,

Fur my world's jes' ez fur ez I kin see, en' she's not there.

Erroun' my heart er snake is curled,

En' boilin' lakes is in my eyes,

En' shadders darken brightest days, en' chase me eb'rywhere.

Honey love, Honey love—does that same moon that beams on
 me

Shine down on you, en' t'rough some cabin winder on your
 bed?

En' does it light from heaben down w'en you's et rest, sweet
 dreams on me,

W'en de bloodhoun's sleep, en' eb'rything is stiller than de
 dead?

Does de win' w'ich blows de corn

Blow eny pray'r I pray to you—

Or de clickin' in my t'roat—or de tickin' in my heart?

Do you think ob me et morn,

En' w'at I uster say to you,

In de good ole—sweet ole—dear ole days, before de auction
 mart?

Honey love, Honey love—my heart en' arms jes' ache fur
 you!

I doan' know w'edder you is east, er west, er north, er
 south—

But eb'ry night, en' eb'ry morn, er little pray'r I make fur you,
 En' I think Gord puts it in my heart, en' takes it from my
 mouth.

I knows your soul is bery white,

No matter, dear, how black your face,

En' I'm sure I'll one day meet you in er better world than
 this.

So, Honey love, good-by—good-night—

I send this song out into space;

Dey owns your body, but your soul is mine to love en' kiss!

WASHINGTON AND MEN.

Let's sing a patriotic song of patriotic days,
And pass the flagons down along our patriotic ways ;
But fill them to the very brim, before we send them, then—
George Washington ! a health to him, and to his dauntless
men !

The hush of night, the flush of morn, their iron souls all
knew ;
Their red and rebel hearts in scorn and rage in dead days
flew,
Defying tyrant laws and might, from Lexington, to where
Cornwallis saw the splendid light of Freedom in the air !

God bless their rebel souls, and bless their red rebellious
hearts !
And may our Mother Earth caress each heart, until it starts,
All flushed, as in the days of yore, from underneath the sod,
To fly on Freedom's wings before the peaceful throne of God !

God bless each Continental son who gave us these glad times !
God bless our noble Washington—ring clear and sweet, glad
chimes !
Ring into living hearts and souls love, courage, faith, and
then—
As the glad music rolls and rolls—George Washington and
Men !

MY NEIGHBORS.

My neighbors are honest, and quiet, and meek ;
They are in the frame houses, just over the way.
Not one of my neighbors a quarrel will seek,
Nor invite ; and they're made of the commonest clay.
They lie not, they sigh not ; they care not for any
Man, woman or child, who inhabits this sphere.
Queer, is it not ?—among all of the many
Who live here below, there is none to them dear.

Their houses are all that my neighbors possess—
 But their houses are wooden, not brownstone, like mine ;
 And my neighbors' expenses and incomes are less
 Than would pay for a pint of the cheapest of wine !
 But they seem quite contented : I've watched them from here
 (Though watching one's neighbors is not quite the thing—
 And they never watch me) year after year—
 Through summer, and autumn, and winter, and spring.

They are not slaves of fashion, or passion, I know.
 They drink not, they think not, they swear not at all ;
 They lend not (nor borrow) ; they're pure as the snow
 Ere it touches the ground, when winds bluster and brawl.
 They know not the meaning of envy or hate—
 They possess no ambitions, and harbor no spite.
 They rest in their houses, unmindful of fate,
 From night-time till day-time—from morn until night.

Grim Death has no fears for these neighbors of mine.
 They're indifferent to sunshine, to snow and to rain.
 They care not to breakfast, to lunch or to dine—
 Indigestion will never give my neighbors pain !
 You cannot call one of my neighbors a churl ;
 Every one to a scandal will turn a deaf ear.
 They frown not upon the unfortunate girl
 Who seeks mercy and rest from the end of the pier.

My neighbors will never gloat over the fall
 Of a weak brother fighting the battle of life.
 Not one of my masculine neighbors will call
 The plainest or fairest of sweet women wife !
 They often go in—and they never come out :—
 But my neighbors are only inanimate clay,
 And the little frame houses I'm writing about
 Are in Trinity Churchyard, just over the way.

TO ANONYMA.

I've read between your lines, from end to end,
 And, be you man or woman, you're a friend.
 Now, with my golden-hearted friends I rank you :
 You're clever—it was neat and nice, so—thank you.

WANTED—A POET.

Oh, for a poet to know !
Oh, for one broad, deep and pure !
Oh, for a poet to praise in these days,
As Byron, the royal, praised Moore !

Is there a Browning alive,
To-day, in this beautiful land ?
With the might of him—sight of him—
Light of him—height of him—
Art of him—heart of him—hand !

Poet on paper and off—
Poet by day and by night :
Not a gnat—not a mole—
But a man, with a soul,
And a pen, not of spite—
For the right !

Bard with no gooseberry eyes
When a brother bard's music we sing—
We'll praise him and love him—
Twine laurels above him,
And his soul to the white stars we'll fling !

Poet who stabs not, nor squirms,
When he reads a good song not his own—
Out with him ! up with him !
This royal cup with him !
Place for him there near the throne !

LAVENDER STREET.

The wild winds may whistle and roar, out among
The bare pines, as they race out to sea,
Where frigates and shallops are battered, and flung
Fathoms deep, when the storm king is free ;
But tenderly, lowly and sweetly, they sing
When they turn round a corner, and greet
A row of low houses, to which the vines cling—
For they know they're in Lavender Street.

It's miles from the hurry, and jostle, and roar,
And the dust, of the barbaric town ;
The angels of God from the faraway shore,
Upon that street look lovingly down.
They know that an angel is back of that vine,
With a face just as gentle and sweet
As the purest and sweetest in their world or mine—
The dear Lily of Lavender Street.

They know that she visits the sick and the poor,
Spreading gladness wherever she goes ;
They know, and I know, that her soul is as pure
As the soul in the heart of a rose.
They hear the sweet song that she sings to the morn,
As her flower-like hands and her feet
Keep time to the rhyme in a poet's soul born,
Far away from sweet Lavender Street.

They see her each night, as she kneels by her bed,
For her true eyes then look into theirs ;
And to her from Heaven a blessing is sped
As tender as one of her prayers.
Ah ! they love her so much ! and that's why my heart,
When away from her, beats a retreat,
From my breast to hers—from the barbaric mart—
To her bower in Lavender Street.

IN ALL MY DREAMS.

In all my dreams, I see thy rose-leaf face ;
In all my dreams, I hear thy honied sighs ;
And in my lonely watches I can trace
Thy celestial and incomparable eyes !

Through all my days, a thrush sings in my heart
Sad songs of what the coming years will be ;
But, when night falls, a nightingale will start,
Within my soul, glad lyrics, dear, of thee.

WASHINGTON.

I sing of one who lives, and is not dead,
Whose name and fame can never, never die :
The grave, calm man, of solemn voice and eye,
Of martial soul, great heart, firm hand, clear head,
Who through the gates of hell his legions led,
Beneath a frowning sky !
Oppressed by hate and envy in the North,
By thoughts of those he cherished in the South,
With courageable heart he still went forth,
Through famine and through drouth,
To be the savior—father—of the land,
In the hollow of God's hand !

I see him in the rich Virginia fields,
Amid the clover and the asphodel,
While round him boom the bees, 'neath burnished shields,
And over him the wood-bards' clear notes swell—
A happy boy, with butterflies at play,
Through a long summer day.
And then I see the young surveyor tramp
Where the wild red men and deer had gone before ;
And, when the day is dead, I see him camp
Beneath the stars, where swollen rivers roar.
I see him with his sweetheart lead the dance ;
I catch the words he pours into her ear ;
I see him spinning a (love) song, perchance,
And all his disappointed sighs I hear.
I see him through the French and Indian wars,
In training for the work that's sure to come,
When King George's long-endured, tyrannic laws
Will be appealed from to the music of the drum !
I see him when the shot at Lexington
Goes whistling through the balmy, generous South—
And I see the fine, indomitable mouth
Of Virginia's most indomitable son,
As he buckles on his sword—his charger strides,
And northward rides !

I see him swing through streets in Boston town ;
I hear him, through his almost sleepless nights,
Speak words of cheer, out on Dorchester Heights,
When his ragged Continentals groan and frown.

I see him cross the icy Delaware,
 Beneath December's icy, starless skies ;
 And Trenton, Princeton, rise before my eyes,
 And then, again, grim, awful, blank despair !
 No food—no clothes—no blankets—hardly fire !
 No shot—no powder—nothing to inspire
 Their weary souls—but our great Hero there !
 With bleeding hearts and feet, they watch the day
 Go sadly down the West :
 Upon the white and frozen earth they rest,
 In that bleak, wind-swept gorge,
 While their great commander kneels him down to pray,
 Upon the frozen sod,
 To the Almighty God,
 At Valley Forge !

“ Dear God, who sees each lush grass-blade that grows ;
 Dear God, who gives the forest minstrels song ;
 Who commandest every wind that ever blows ;
 To whom all stars, all hearts, all minds, belong ;
 Who sees, with an all-seeing Eye, the souls
 Of puny men—make our hearts, our souls, strong
 To fight the good fight in our holy cause,
 And give us courage to go on—nor pause,
 And guide us from the cruel deeps to shoals.
 Thou givest wandering birds in storms a tree ;
 Thou temperest the wind to the shorn lamb ;
 Thou hast made the dead to rise, the blind to see ;
 Lo ! I bear my soul to Thee for what I am—
 A poor, weak mortal, with a love of Thee,
 And with a love of country and of peace,
 And Liberty.
 Vouchsafe to lead us on to victory,
 And from bondage and from tyranny release
 Thy children and their land.
 Turn our night to day,
 And still hold us in the hollow of Thy hand. * * *
 Lord, hear me pray ! ”

And the Lord He heard him pray there in the snow,
 A grand century ago,
 Or the Stars and Stripes would not be yonder flying !
 Now, I see him nurse the sick and watch the dying—

Hear his deep and soothing voice
 Bid the weary ones rejoice ;
 See him bow his martial head
 O'er the freezing—dying—dead,
 While the tears rain down his deeply furrowed cheeks,
 Through those days, and nights, and weeks,
 Until the spring comes, once again—
 With it, courage to his men—
 Food and raiment, one by one ;
 And, when everything was done
 To warm each Continental son,
 Why, he marched into the fray
 With a heart so light and gay,
 That care and all its satellites went shrieking far away—
 And the warming that the British got ere Monmouth town
 was won !

Fought he north, south, east and west, and he fought his
 very best !
 And at Yorktown met Cornwallis, whom he straightway
 made his guest—
 With his seven thousand men !
 You know the rest :
 How he laid away the sword—took up his pen—
 Bade his generals good-by,
 In Fraunce's Tavern, with a sigh,
 And a big tear in each eye,
 To become the "Cincinnatus of the West."
 How they offered him a "crown" !
 How he dashed the bauble down
 When they would have made him "king" !
 Sing ! sing ! sing !
 Ring ! ring ! ring !
 His virtues and his praises, while the skies are up above you !
 While the earth's beneath our feet, noble WASHINGTON, we'll
 love you !

Till the Liberty you gave us is a poor thing of the past,
 You shall be the first within our hearts and last !

TO NUGENT ROBINSON.

Dear Nugent, stoop above me—though I'm dead,
 I'll run my fingers through your dear, gray head.

THE ROMANCE OF A ROSE. ✓

Time was, in a garden, when I budded, blossomed, blew
My blushing petals to the morn, to catch the diamond dew.
Wondering, I swayed there in every wanton wind—
Was all the sad and merry world to all my beauties blind?

Bent I just above the sloping, golden-graveled walk,
Where the gay-old, gray-old gardener each morning used to
 stalk,
And whistle to the robins, till he banished half their fears,
As he snipped a dead rose, pillaged by the flying buccaneers.

Dreamed I, in those lush June days, of what my fate would
 be—
Wondered if, and hoped that all, the stars would smile on me;
For if the stars are cruel, cold, indifferent as white,
The rose is as the man is, and it sighs through endless night.

Thought I thus, one morning, as the old man came along,
Piping down the bracing air an old romantic song.
One by one the roses went; then I, too, fell, at last,
And my life beneath the sun and moon, and stars, I knew was
 past.

Came the night when dancers floated down the Baron's hall—
Sighs and sorrows underneath, and pleasures over all!
Then the banquet! in the table's centre I found place—
A thousand roses under me, and over me—her face!

Fragrant-faced, and amber-haired, and rainbow-eyed, she
 reigned,
A crownless queen! and oh, the bliss—on me a look she
 deigned!
Reached she out a jeweled hand—detached me from the rest—
And then I swooned with magic pain, upon her matchless
 breast!

Swooned I there, and in a swoon I heard her heart repeat:
Gall and honey!—money, money!—bitter—bitter-sweet!
If aught else the proud heart said—memory from me slips!
Pressed I, for one golden hour, her warm, red, velvet lips.

Into me her soul she poured, until my own grew gray ;
Until the dawn the turrets tipped on castles far away—
Until the Baron, thick with wine and passion, loudly cried
That the dance and feast were over—and he bore away his
bride.

Went she so ; but I remained, and in a poet's hand.
The look they gave each other I could only understand,
As he stood, with bowed and reverent head, with me close to
his heart—
And so they drifted, that gray morn, oh, countless worlds
apart !

Stony years ago it was—long, Spartan, stony years,
In which the poet saw the world pass through a veil of tears.
Last night he kissed my withered leaves ; and then I saw
him die.
They will find me on his quiet heart—Was that a woman's
sigh ?

THE SINGER IN THE NIGHT.

[Baltimore, April, 1865.]

'Twas night in the South : the stars looked down
On many a panic-stricken town ;
For, over the world, the news had spread
That Abraham Lincoln was dead.

'Twas night in the North, in the East and West ;
And, whether the stars or the sun looked down,
It was night in each man and woman's breast,
And death wore a smile, and Mercy a frown.

'Twas the saddest time in the New World's life ;
'Twas the the maddest time in a hundred years ;
And the husband looked askance at his wife,
For his heart was as full of vague, wild fears
As his good wife's eyes were of sorrowful tears.

Abraham Lincoln was dead, you see—
The Nation's pride, the Republic's Saint :
The soul of millions of souls was free,
And Life was moaning to Death its plaint.

Day after day, when the sun went down,
Streets were deserted in Baltimore town—
Not wholly deserted—for, here and there,
Soldiers were seen, by the street-fires' glare,
Silently pacing, up—down ; to and fro,
Knowing no friend, and fearing no foe.

Children were huddled in bed like sheep.
Not one alone would have dared to sleep.
Too nervous to play, and too frightened to cry ;
Not daring to talk, and knowing not why—
Only, that " something " was " very bad,"
To make their fathers and mothers so sad.

And fathers and mothers whispered, and said
That the best and wisest of men was dead.

And windows were barred, and doors were locked,
And hearts were bleeding, and souls were shocked
In the South, as well as away up North,
And at night scarce a man in the town went forth.

If he went, he was challenged with : " Who goes there ? "
By the sentinels out in the street fires' glare.

That was the state of things, when down
The longest street in Baltimore town
This hymn came rolling—high, glad and clear :

" Sun of my soul ! thou Saviour dear !
It is not Night if thou be near ! "

Mothers and fathers smiled and sighed,
As the unknown singer bravely cried :

" Abide with us when Night is nigh ! "

It seemed to roll from the earth to the sky !
There were comfort and cheer in that singer's cry.

He was a printer, with long, wild hair,
Who strode to his chicks and wife from the case,
Sending that hymn through the midnight air,
To drive away care from each breast and face.

Night after night, that hymn went straight,
From different streets, up to Heaven's gate.
He sent it up as he strode along,
And no one dared to stifle his song.
Through Heaven's gate the good words went,
For peace and sleep to the town were sent.

Now, when a man like that man swerves
From his personal path, I think he deserves
A monument.

THE POET'S POWER.

A bad king gloried in his people's frown—
But a poet's lyric pulled the despot down !

How oft' have strains from one wild poet's lyre
Swept wrong from lovely France, as winds sweep fire ?

How many mothers have hushed babies' cries
By crooning to them poets' lullabies ?

How many lives half-way down Ruin's track
Has a poet's sympathetic lay called back ?

How many men have wooed in vain, and long,
Until they won through some sweet poet's song ?

What lands are sunny, old—but ever young ?
The lands where God's dear troubadours have sung !

When will the stars Siberia cease to scan ?
Not till a Russian Whittier's a man !

Of all that breathe between the sun and sod,
Than true great poets, who are nearer God ?

ONE SIDE.

I led my friend into my house, last night,
To show him all my treasures, one by one,
From red sharks' teeth to pebbles from the sun.
But how to do it, when there was no light,
Except the moon's long beams of gold and white?
No matches could we find, when all was done;
And so I led him forth, to see him run
Across the fields—no wiser—out of sight.

Now, my good friend will tell his friends, to-day,
That one side of my house he only knows,
And nothing of my curios of art;
And yet, I seem from here to hear him say
He counts each thought which through my drenched
soul flows,
And all the priceless treasures of my heart!

THE LAZY POET.

He's like a diver in a southern sea,
Who lolls upon a mossy rock, or sleeps
The white noon hours away above the deeps,
Knowing full well that he's not bond, but free
To dive, when e'er he will, to where a tree
Of coral in its liquid forest creeps
Among the waves where sunbeam never leaps
To kiss its waveless branches in mad glee.

And, so, my poet lolls from day to day,
Or sleeps, while round about the city whirls—
Or, you may see him through the city stroll.
He does not care for what his masters say;
For, when he will, he dives for corals—pearls—
Deep down into the sea within his soul.

TO CHARLES A. DANA.

Well, this is strange: a hawk to your brain clings,
While in your heart a robin red-breast sings.

*AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF MONSIEUR
DUVAL.*

It is night upon Hounslow Heath ; the stage coach is due
there at ten ;
On their chargers sit, 'neath the trees and stars, Monsieur
Duval and his men.

Many a rollicking laugh is borne away on the still night air,
And many a merry joke is heard that would make a parson
stare !

With his mask drawn down, John Randall—" Jack "—he
they call " Sixteen-string "—
Sits on the right of Monsieur Duval ; on his left is the great
Tom King.

Over the lonely heath they look ; not a sound of a hoof or
wheel,
And not a sign of a living thing. Their curses you almost
feel !

They damn the driver and coach, but their oaths are too
heavy to float ;
So, down in their hearts they growl and swear that they'll
cut the driver's throat,

If they have to travel to London town to do that delicate
job.
But, hark !—and look, far over the plain ! All hearts give
a reckless throb :

For there are the lamps and the nags ! See, swiftly and
nearer they come !
" By the beads on ale," Jack Randall cries, " you may strike
me blind and dumb,

" If that ain't the rig ! " and he turns on Tom with sad and
reproachful eyes,
And : " It's slapping the face of Providence to curse such a
beautiful prize ! "

"Less noise, my gallant, impulsive friends!" It is Captain Claude who speaks.

"Less noise be blowed!" growls Jolly Ned; "the first mouthful in two long weeks!"

"Come, Edward, my friend," quoth Captain Claude, "if you and I should fall out,

"You'd be sorry, Ned." "A pun! a pun!" laughs Whistling Dick, with a shout.

"Halt!" from handsome Monsieur Duval. And Lieutenant Jack Randall cries,

"Stop, you dog!" to the frightened whip, who asks some one to blast his eyes!

A gentlewoman, and man, and maid, from the old coach then alight;

Then, last of all, an old London beau, who is almost dead with fright!

Then Jack, and Tom, and Dick, and Ned, in a cool, professional way,

Lighten the coach, while Monsieur Duval just hums, "The Devil's to Pay!"

When all are relieved, from the whip and guard to the gentlewoman and men,

Monsieur Duval says something to Dick, dismounts, with an air, and then,

While he leads the maiden, with courtliest grace, east, west, north and south,

The sweetest music you ever heard comes out of our brave Dick's mouth!

A stately dance, that was born in France, when kings indeed were kings—

And, keeping time to the air and rhyme, the king of highwaymen sings:

Lady fair, I clasp thy fingers

Reverently in mine.

In spite of fate, within me lingers

For thy sex love divine!

Oh, lady fair, be not alarmèd :
 My men are but thy slaves ;
 And thy sweet life is charmèd—charmèd—
 While we are out of graves !

Lady fair, thy sex is cruel
 To men with tender hearts.
 A loving heart is, sure, a jewel
 Where only pure flame darts !
 Then, why doth thy sex ever burn it,
 And fondle coarser clay ?
 It's thine to cherish, or to spurn it—
 Why spurn it ever—pray ?

Lady fair, we tread this measure ;
 We may meet not again.
 Ah, my dear, be some man's treasure ;
 Give his fond heart no pain.
 I would not be here, on the highway,
 To-night, were my love true !
 Now, lady fair, as I've had my way,
 I kiss my hand to you !

As Monsieur Duval led her up to the coach, the old moon,
 from behind a cloud,
 Shone full in her face ; and he grew as pale as a man in his
 coffin and shroud !

'Twas the girl he had loved in the old, glad days, when he
 was a beardless youth,
 And believed in woman, and woman's love, as he did in his
 Maker and truth !

They left their treasures and galloped away ; Claude Duval
 wore a terrible frown ;
 And the coach, with his love and her London beau, went
 swinging towards London town.

TO LEWIS ROSENTHAL.

Tyll Owlglass is not dead—he lives in you,
 You imp—you angel, Lewis—I mean, “Lew” !

AN ETCHING.

The ancient sun is rolling out of sight ;
 The west is one vast sea of burnished brass ;
 A white road, like a river, through the grass
 Winds slowly in the dying day's soft light.

Belated birds are on their homeward flight ;
 And, as they silently and swiftly pass,
 Like nuns from worldly dreams to midnight mass,
 Day dies : winds moan : the moon reigns : it is night.

Five tall, gaunt trees beside the white road stand ;
 Their lofty, leafless limbs sway in the breeze,
 Like Lear's arms when Britain's crownless king.
 This must be cruel Louis' ghostly land !—
 For cages dangle from the five gaunt trees,
 And in the cages five grim corpses swing !

DRY ROT✓

His days and nights are in a wine-shop passed,
 With absinthe, pencil, pad, and cigarette,—
 Making foul jokes for fouler sheets, still wet
 With his last squib, which he thinks will outlast
 His liquor-soddened fancies, and be classed
 With those that Hook and Jerrold did beget.
 Without ambition, he—without regret
 For buds and blossoms to the four winds cast.

Beauty and fine apparel once were his :
 The love of woman and respect of men :
 The dreams and power poets only know.
 He should have been a king of thought—he is
 A serf of passion, with his voice and pen,
 Where only flowers of death and evil grow.

TO FREDERICK BRYTON.

Into Frédéric Lemaître's shoes you'll get—
 When you do pick them up. And yet—and yet !

DIAMOND-DUST.

EMERSON.

Each line of his a flash : each thought a star :
Flaming—divine—as Jove and Venus are !

BALZAC.

He roamed at will among the souls of men,
And into women's hearts he dipped his pen.

CARLYLE.

The dear, old, crabbèd, interesting fellow !
As time goes on, our hearts to him will mellow.

AMÉLIE RIVES.

Climb up ! climb on ! and let the mongrels cry !
Your star's behind that rainbow in the sky !

DICKENS.

None greater ever lived—since Shakespeare drew
Othello, Hamlet, Lear and the Jew.

R. L. STEVENSON.

Let Dickens be : he did not rise to fall.
You'll live on *Treasure Island*—if at all.

BULWER.

No poet you ; although your gifts were high,
As artificial as a woman's lie.

BROWNING.

A star fell to the earth, one golden morn,
And glorious Browning, poet-king, was born !

TRACY ROBINSON.

You're worth a score of men far better known :
But Fame, like Death, is bound to have its own.

JEAN INGELow AND JOHN PAYNE.

Oh, stars of the East ! I wonder whether
You're not the pure two that sang together !

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.

As pure your soul and song as flying snow,
You—What? You this: you singing cameo!

THE LITERARY PRIG.

He rounds a prosy sonnet in a year,
And his small life is rounded with a sneer.

A BAD ACTOR.

Intended not for any land or age—
An actor off, but never on, the stage.

A BAD WRITER.

When I would give what's in my head a rest,
I read this—God knows what!—and at his best.

SELF-PITY.

That man is poor in intellectual pelf
Who pities not his neighbor, but himself.

THE RHYMER AND THE CYNIC.

The Rhymers.

I turn truer rhymes than Keats did with his pen!

The Cynic.

But there were no rhyming dictionaries then.

MUSIC.

Music breaks my soul in two,
And lets the light of heaven through!

TO A "DEAR" FRIEND.

She spoke my name in anger? It is well.
She *thought* of me—I rise to heaven, from hell!

TO CELIA THAXTER.

Sweet, womanly, gentle—yet strong,
With the winds and waves and God in her song!

E. R. SILL—"ANDREW HEDBROOK."

A white soul flew to heaven when *you* died—
Sweet poet, solemn-voiced and diamond-eyed!

THE FOUR SEASONS. ✓

He was ten years old, and was willing to swear,
As he drew a girl on his sled from school,
That no other maiden was half so fair :
If his heart was warm, why, his head was cool !
He would have sworn—as he lifted the maid
From the little red sled that cold winter's day,
And felt her small hand on his shoulder laid—
By fathomless eyes of gray.

Then he was twenty, and all he possessed,
From his heart and hand to his carriage and pair,
He would surely have given to be caressed
By a queen in her teens with amorous hair.
Oh ! he would have bartered his heart—no less
Than his soaring soul—to the devil's crew,
For one loving look from la grande duchesse—
With the wonderful eyes of blue !

Thirty wild years had passed over his head,
And the blue eyes and gray were closed in death.
As he heard in a room in Florence a tread,
And felt on his face the perfumed breath
Of an Aphrodite—he mentally said—
(Through the twenty years he never looked back,
For the heart of the boy, like the eyes, was dead)—
Those passionate eyes of black !

Just thirty long years have drifted away
Since he drew the girl on his sled from school.
He is rugged and strong, but his heart is gray—
He has lived and loved like the veriest fool !
For the eyes that looked into his last night,
On the plaza there, as the sun went down,
Were modest and deep, and honest and bright—
Her beautiful eyes of brown !

MANDOLINATA.

Those flower-like fingers so caress the strings,
That every wind in passing stops and sighs ;
And two great stars in heaven, as she sings,
Regret that they are not her peerless eyes !

WHEN ALL THE WORLD'S ASLEEP

When all the world's asleep, I think of thee,
In thy brown cot among the western hills;
Thy sunny face through space love wafts to me,
And sad emotion all my being thrills.

And while the world's asleep, I wander back
Along the thorny path to golden youth—
When we were struggling up the stony track,
Past the milestones of Poetry and Truth.

We parted—ah, thou knowest when and where—
'Twas in thy favorite month—sweet, sunny May;
The falling apple blossoms kissed thy hair—
How many years since then have rolled away!

Thou art in my soul from early morn till dark—
From dark to dawn I think and dream of thee.
The heavy-laden, golden-freighted barque,
For thee and me, will soon come in from sea.

Thy voice is borne on every wind that blows,
Thine eyes look down from every golden star;
Thy perfumed breath is hid in every rose—
Thy form floats through the wreaths from my segar.

Thy tresses seem to brush my face to-night;
Just now thy warm, red mouth seemed touching mine;
Thy tapering arms, so velvety and white,
Seem round my neck to passionately twine.

Thy queenly head is resting on my breast,
Thy heart is beating hard against my own;
Thou art whispering: "Rest, loyal lover, rest!
Through all the years my love hath only grown."

Say, shall we meet in that brown cot, where I
Once gave to thee a mighty love and deep?
Shall it be when passion-flowers fade and die?
Or, shall we meet—when all the world's asleep?

ZORA. ✓

She was as beautiful as a dream of Shelley's !
She was prouder than the very devil !
With hair as glossy as your sister Nelly's ;
And in danger of the wildest kind—she'd revel !
As any child that lived she was observant ;
And all she loved was just your humble servant !

She loved me with a love that passeth telling ;
And I loved her as most men love a woman.
I feel the hot tears to my eyelids welling—
She came so very near to being human !
And if there was not a great soul in her eyes,
Then there isn't any moon in yonder skies !

Her ears were smaller, better shaped, and thinner
Than half the ones we see at your reception.
She was cleaner-minded than—that red-faced sinner !
Who sits with Nelly, there, and base deception.
Her neck was like a rainbow spanning heaven—
And when I won her she had just turned seven.

'Twas out in Kansas, many years ago now ;
The track was thronged with gentlemen—and others ;
And there were ladies present, you must know now,
As good as your good sister, or our mothers.
I rode Colonel Rider's blooded "Slaughter,"
Which was loaned me by the colonel's blooded daughter.

The colonel's daughter and my chum were lovers.
She was pretty near as pretty as your sister.
You've seen the gold on wings of golden plovers ?
Well, it was in her hair when the sun kissed her.
She had her money up on me and "Slaughter,"
And we landed her a winner ! She'd have bought her,

My Zora, with her winnings ! Did I sell her ?
I would not have sold her for a farm in Heaven !
She loved a joke as well as Sammy Weller,
Or as poets love the hours past eleven.
She could gallop up a hill as fast—yes, faster
Than some men gallop down without a master.

She saved me once from fifty wild Comanches—
Who were chasing me across a wild savanna—
By flying, like a gale through leafless branches,
In the most terrific and most royal manner !
She was just as brave and loyal as men should be.
And, if Nature wasn't cruel, as men would be.

As beautiful, my Zora, as her name was—
And the very name of Zora's a caress !
And I lost her—through my fault ; yes, mine the shame
was—

In a way that you could never, never guess.
I broke her heart in less than half a minute,
And killed the love, and pride, and fire within it !

Old Rider's daughter's husband lay a-dying—
He'd been my chum, you know, before he married ;
And I was told to come where he was lying,
Just thirty miles away. I scarcely tarried
To fling around my Zora's head a bridle—
Though all the time it seemed that I was idle.

For twenty miles across the prairie's level
We flew, like news proclaiming grim disaster ;
And then down in my heart some scheming devil
Seemed urging me, until I hissed out, "Faster !"
She shook her head, until I had to pluck her ;
Again she shook it—then, by God, I struck her !

My hand had never till that time descended
Upon her glossy head except in kindness.
She stood as if a thunderbolt had ended
Her precious life ; and I—I, in my blindness,
Still urged her on ; but there she stood and trembled,
As if blasts from hell had in her veins assembled !

I then dismounted—kissed her and caressed her,
As tenderly as if I were a lover—
By all endearing terms I knew addressed her
For the love and trust I never could recover ;
And when she sank before her cruel rider,
He flung himself in anguish down beside her.

* * * * *

Look after Nelly ; don't let that brute wed her.
 You will find this one a pretty fair Havana.
 She's left him ? Well, you know the life he led her !
 I *don't* like that lascivious fellow's manner !
 He'll break her heart——

“ But Zora ? ”

——Heed my warning——
 Beneath me she was lying dead—next morning.

LOOK DOWN. √

Look down from where your golden hair
 Is tossing in the breeze ;
 Smile on me, sweet, from your retreat,
 My heavy heart to ease.
 Your sapphire eyes, as warm as sighs
 Upspringing from that heart,
 Will cheer me on when night is gone :
 Look, sweet, ere I depart !

Ah ! love, I know that rivers flow
 More sweetly than my song ;
 But they will sing to anything,
 While I to you belong—
 To only you, whose eyes of blue
 Are melting in my soul,
 Sing I, my love ; so, from above
 Let honied phrases roll !

Good-night, sweetheart ! Good-nights depart
 With golden days and years.
 To-night is good—so, sweet, you should
 From my heart brush the tears.
 'Twill overflow, when good nights go
 To never come again.
 I've climbed to this ! Now, sweet, a kiss !
 Ah ! I've not climbed in vain !

TO HORACE VINTON.

When you appear, Charles Fechter's in the van
 (Though dead), as brave Don Cæsar de Bazan !

IF IT HAD BEEN MY LOT.

If it had been my lot to love thee,
 In other days, in fairer times,
 The skies would brighter be above thee :
 Memory's bells ring rarer chimes ;
 Into our lives far sweeter showers
 Had fallen, and our paths to-day
 Would not diverge, and sweeter flowers
 Had budded on my Queen's highway.

If it had been my lot to woo thee
 In days that are forever dead,
 A warmer heart I had brought to thee,
 And thy dear heart would not have bled ;
 And thy sweet eyes would not be dimmer
 Than maidens' eyes when Love is young ;
 And in thy life yet joy would glimmer,
 And I a sweeter song had sung.

If it had been my lot to call thee
 The sweetest of all sweet names—wife !
 Not any grief could ere befall thee,
 Thy love had gladdened all my life.
 Thy heart would quicker beat—thy laughter
 Would wake dead echoes in my heart,
 And Love would reign thro' life—and after !
 Love ! ask thy heart why we should part ?

MIDNIGHT.

I stand, dumb, by the side of your dear, dreamless head,
 Sweet, to-night ;
 And my heart is as cold as this heart that is dead,
 For the light
 Has gone out of my life and my soul—joy is past,
 Grief's in place :
 And I stand here and feel—nay, I know—I'm the last
 Of my race.

But I'll hold you and clasp you, again, to my heart,
 Dearest love ;
 We shall meet in some wonderful time, ne'er to part,
 Up above :
 You will know me, I you—and we'll wander along,
 Side by side,
 Through the dear land of peace and of love and of song,
 My dead bride !

TRIFLES. JV

A crystal drop fell from a swollen cloud
 Into the throbbing, undulating sea.
 "Alas ! alas !" it cried, despairingly,
 "I'm but as one man in a mighty crowd—
 One voice where fifty millions call aloud—
 One leaf upon a massive oaken tree—
 One day in all the millions yet to be—
 Oh ! ere I fell, that Time had donned his shroud !"
 And so it sank into the sobbing main,
 And dropped into an oyster's ragged shell.
 It lay there—hardened—died from mental pain—
 And Science found it, in a diving bell,
 A wondrous, flawless, priceless, princely gem ;
 And now it rests in a King's diadem !

An eagle dropped a feather on the way
 To his high home upon the mountain-side.
 A plowboy picked it up and quickly hied
 To master's house to hear what he would say.
 The master took the feathered shaft. That day
 He said : "Unto the poet's house I'll ride."
 He rode ; and when the poet he espied
 He said : "Now write a patriotic lay !"
 The poet heard his story to the end,
 The red blood dyed his cheek the hue of wine ;
 And in his eyes there glowed a light divine.
 He spake : "Adown the ages I will send
 A song that will the multitudes entrance !"
 That night he sang a glorious song of France !

A bird sang, in the dying day's soft light,
 Upon a tree beside a cottage door,
 A mellow song ; not loudly did it pour
 Its modest effort on the coming night—
 But softly, sweetly—as good dames delight
 To sing their babes to sleep. Its carol o'er,
 It flew away, on airy wing did soar
 To rest upon a distant tree-top's height.
 Within the cot, upon a tiny bed,
 A lad lay dying ; all endeavors vain
 To banish from his face the awful pain,
 Until he heard, without and overhead,
 The song-bird's notes ; his face lit up, he cried :
 "God bless that pretty bird !" and, smiling, died.

TO A THRUSH IN TRINITY CHURCHYARD.

Singing and swinging above me there,
 Above me there, in the open air—
 Oh, hush !
 List to him as he opens his throat !
 Oh, how delicious that mellow note
 Is, Thrush !

Swinging—and singing beyond compare—
 I see you there from my office chair,
 And lush
 Is the ditty that's wafted above
 The town of strife to the one of love,
 Brown Thrush !

Singing and swinging, so free from care !
 But, alas ! the trees will soon be bare—
 Don't rush
 Out of my sight, till this song is done,
 From this land of ice to the land of sun,
 Sweet Thrush !

You will sing and swing above my lair
 Till rover Sol's ephemeral glare
 Will flush
 The spire above the pleasant old den
 Where I sing—and swing a clerical pen,
 O Thrush !

CITY BOUND. √√

His friends and playmates watched him as he bravely onward
 strode,
 With some silver in his pocket, down the quiet country road :
 And the worn-out horses in the fields looked over rustic bars,
 And wondered, maybe, if his heart would bear the city's scars.
 Then dogs barked, and the game-fowl crew, to cheer him on
 his way,
 And, whistling some blithe ditty, he tramped on—as game as
 they !
 For the world was all before him then ; and with him, youth
 and pride ;
 And he did not know how those he'd left had closed their
 doors and sighed.
 And when a little girl ran out, and pinned what she had found
 (A bunch of heartsease) on his coat, he kissed her, City Bound.

One by one the years rolled on, till twenty passed away.
 We are pretty sure his soul, and we know his head, is gray.
 One by one his playmates went beyond the seas and skies,
 And one by one his hopes were borne to leeward on his sighs.
 His heart knew not the city's scars while youth, like winds,
 was free—
 But to-day his heart is ribboned, and the winds are all at sea !
 There are no chains upon his feet, no gyves upon his hands—
 But his heart and soul are fettered as he dreams of other lands.
 And year by year to live he makes his solitary round
 (With no heartsease on his coat, nor underneath it)—City
 Bound.

*WRITTEN UNDER A PORTRAIT OF AMÉLIE
 RIVES.*

What an aristocratic face and form,
 And hand, and arm—
 And, then—the head !
 We know, whatever comes, in calm or storm,
 Thy deathless charm—
 Thou thoroughbred !

MY FLOWER. ✓

Oh, to have her back again, for just a golden minute,
 With the same dear dream I knew down in her eyes divine !
 And her little hand, warm with the rosy palm within it,
 Fluttering, like a wounded dove, trustfully to mine !

Just to feel her heart again against my own heart beating,
 And to wed to lyrics her delicious little sighs !
 Just to see the roses, white and red, in her face meeting—
 With the moonlight of a June night in her miracles of eyes !

Just to float away again, with her on airy pinions,
 When the banners of the sun are forming jasper bars
 Around the vast savannas of the king of kings' dominions !
 Just to dream, and live and love, with her among the stars !

Just to sing, as once I sang, when all the world was sleeping,
 Beneath her eyes, within her arms, between the moon and
 sward !
 Just to see the crimson waves along her shoulders creeping—
 Just to sing another song—for just the old reward !

IN A CAFÉ. ✓

How was I to know
 That she spoke not the truth ?
 My heart was warm, and so
 Full of love and youth !
 She had such sweet, true eyes ;
 She was so pure and fair ;
 Her words, her lips, her sighs—
 And, Oh, her tender hair !

That was many years
 Ere you were born. Egad !
 I have wept more tears
 Than you have seen, my lad.
 I've had my hell—here—
 Within this heart of mine—
 Many a weary year—
 Damn it, pass the wine !

There—forgive me. You
 Can do that little thing?
 Young—good-looking, too—
 With all your songs to sing!
 Why, at your age, I
 (How old? “Just twenty-five”!)
 Could not even try
 To hate one man alive!

So, if hate you must
 For that “damn it”—No?
 Be kind enough to just
 Pass the wine, then. So!

We lived in a room—
 One plank from the sky!
 That was when the bloom
 Was on the peach; and, my
 God, those happy days!
 They come to me in dreams.
 We trod the hawthorn ways,
 By gay, do-nothing streams.
 And every morn I'd rise
 To wake her with a kiss
 On each of her sweet eyes—
 Then make the kettle hiss.
 And, Oh, the poets! Hey!
 We'd fill our souls with sweets,
 From Black-Eyed Susan Gay
 To star-eyed Johnny Keats.
 From Keats to Tennyson,
 And Browning, we would go;
 And when the day was done,
 I'd sing myself—but low.

Well, one by one they went—
 The poets—from our room:
 Some, to pay the rent,
 Some, to woo the bloom
 Back to her pale cheek.
 How did I plan and strive!
 Twenty books a week
 Kept my love alive.

Balzac went, at last—
 Shakespeare followed him.
 (Giants of the past !)
 Grief's cup to the brim
 Fate put to my lips ;
 And in the twilight dim
 I drained the cup—in sips.

She told me—what I'd guessed,
 Through all the weeks that she
 Her little bed had pressed,
 And raved of one—not me.
 Her heart was never mine,
 She said, in a low tone,
 As with her eyes divine
 She gazed into my own.
 "Forget—be strong—forgive,
 Before the happy end !"
 She'd half the night to live—
 I groaned out something, friend.
 With her cold hand and white
 In mine, she turned her head :
 "I'll meet my love to-night,"
 She whispered, and was dead.

That's my romance. She died
 When I was twenty-nine ;
 I'm fifty now * * * He sighed.
 I softly passed the wine.

JENNY O'BRIEN.

Oh, Jenny O'Brien, it's out here I'm sighin', while yure in
 there spinnin' a gown an' a song,
 An' the cowld winds is screechin', and, be me sowl, reachin'
 to grab at me heart, where the cowld don't belong!
 For you are a part of the heart in the breast of me—you, wid
 yure warm, cosy, meltin', swate ways!
 An' that's why I sigh for you; that's why I'd die for you—

JENNY.

Be off out o' that, Mister Tim, if you plaze!

Swate Jenny O'Brien, you'll soon have me cryin'—cowl'd
winds an' cowl'd words is too much at a time,
An' thin you'll be sorry that you didn't borry some tinderer
words, upon which I could climb
Right up to the place where yure May-mornin' face would
make a good Christian of any wild Turk ;
And yure blue Irish eyes, dear—like gims in the skies, dear—

JENNY.

Away wid you, Tim, an' lave me to me work!

Dear Jenny O'Brien, for you I'll be lyin' as cowl'd as the ghost
of a ghost, pretty soon;
For, in spite of my pl'adin', an' the heart of me bl'adin', you
sit there a-spinnin' yure gown an' yure chune!
Can't you tell be the tones o' me, dear, how the bones o' me
rattle and squ'ake wid the love an' the frost?
Ah! she knows I adore her—but the county's before her—

JENNY.

Come in, Tim, an' find what I'm sure I have lost !

Oh, Jenny O'Brien, you've saved me from dyin'! I'm as limp
as a rag that's been hung out to dry!
Swate Jenny O'Brien, wid you I'll be flyin, to the priest in
the morn, when the sun's in the sky!
Put yure arm round me neck—I'm that w'ake, that a peck from
a jackdaw would sind, 'twixt a lie an' a wink,
Me poor sowl up above. But you lost somethin', love?

JENNY.

'Twas me heart, Timmy, dear, but I've found it—I think.

TWO SOULS.

Beyond the boundless seas of utter night
Two scarred and ribboned souls together drew.
One howled : " I'm flogged from heaven and God's sight !"
One moaned : " I seek for that I never knew."

TO ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

When thou wert born, the wanton winds sang low,
And Nature smiled upon her newest toy :
She gave to thee the frankness of a boy—
A great, warm heart ; a soul and brain aglow
With all the nobler passions that do blow
Great thoughts around the world ; and then, in joy,
She gave thee mirth, and said : "Thou shalt destroy
The weeds that in my children's gardens grow."

And what a faithful gardener thou art here,
The roses growing in our gardens tell :
We look for weeds, but look for them in vain.
The rose of Hope grows in the place of Fear ;
The rose of Reason in the place of Hell—
In the wondrous gardens of the human brain !

NATHAN HALE.

Was there ever man that lived, man that died,
With such courage in his heart, and such pride
In his great and noble soul ?
And the centuries may roll,
Until Time's death-knell will toll,
Ere the world shall hear a tale,
With wide-parted lips and pale,
Like the story and the glory of the life and death of Hale.

Just a youth, not twenty-one, when that gun
Was heard in Concord town and Lexington ;
After which, came rushing down,
Madly down, from Boston town,
With a warm, wet face and brown,
A wild rider in the night,
Who yelled, with main and might,
That the hoary and the gory King of England wanted fight !

"Fight he'll get—and lots of it!" shouted all
That could crowd into New London's public hall.

"Leave your plowshares in the field!
Shoulder flintlocks! Sabers wield!
Let us march and never yield!
We'll make George the Fat turn tail
Like a maddened, harpooned whale!"

Those the stinging and the ringing sentiments of Nathan Hale..

He practiced what he preached: that very night,
Kissed his sweetheart, Alice Adams, by the light

Of the lovely April moon;
Said he'd come back to her soon;
Hummed a country dancing tune
(Just to drive away the frown
In her troubled eyes of brown),

And went swinging—ay! and singing—up the dale to win re-
nown!

Chest, deep and broad; his inches, seventy-two—
Such a merry devil in his splendid eyes of blue!

Oh! and all the girls were glad
Just to dance with him; and mad
With gray grief when he was sad.
And the day he said good-by,
Not a maiden's eye was dry—

And sweet Alice sorrow's chalice said she'd drain if he should
die.

Ever anxious to help people in distress—

All the men loved Nathan Hale, and no less

Did the dumb in field and street—

Did the poor dog at his feet,

His warm nature was so sweet.

And his humor was so quaint,

That his laugh would make a saint,

Like St. Peter, smile much sweeter when the kept-out made
complaint.

Fifteen moons had waxed and waned since Nat Hale
Left his Alice, weak and weeping, in the dale.

Through those months Hale fought and bled,
And one night his row-boat sped,
While the stars watched overhead—

Sped across Long Island Sound.
 When the British camp he found,
 By the holy stars he slowly went upon his dauntless round !

With the Britons' plans within his army boots,
 He was captured by the British raw recruits.

Then he knew he had to die.
 There was murder in each eye,
 As they shouted : " Kill the spy !"
 He was tried, found guilty—shot—
 Then and there, upon the spot ?

No : his jury, filled with fury, swore they'd hang him up to rot !

And they led him out beneath an apple-tree.
 They bound his hands—feet ; roped his neck, and he
 ('Though Cunningham raved and swore,
 Jeered, insulted him—and *more !*)
 Was as dauntless as before !

" Come," they yelled, " confess, you spy !
 Ere you to the devil fly !"

Then : " I merely wish, sincerely, I had many lives to die."

Such the man, and such his death. Is he dead?
 I'll leave that to your heart, and soul, and head.

Other men have died since then ;
 Other men will live, too, when
 We are nothing, once again.
 That is all. I've had my say.

I will—you will—die some day :

What's it matter if men chatter when the soul has gone away ?

LEILA.

This is her face. I presume you never met her ?

Or, you'd look less blue as you walk along Broadway ;
 Ah ! but you would. No, you wouldn't ? I know better—
 Why, her mere presence will drive indigoes away !

Just see the hair round her snowy temples cluster—

Please note the arching brow above the soulful eye ;

O ! Ronsard, Marlowe, Herrick, Robert Browning ! must her
 Praises be but sung by a poet poor as I ?

Note well the outline of the Grecian nose of Leila—
 See the curved nostril and exquisite upper lip.
 You can't see her teeth ; if you could, I'm sure you'd feel a
 Feeling that the bees feel ere they honeysuckles sip !

See the contour of the chin—and the mouth above it !
 The long silken lashes and the wondrous eyes of blue—
 Eyes I've tried to fathom—labor lost !—still, I love it—
 As fathomless are they as the ocean once I knew.

Quiet is the river that by my door is flowing—
 But not more quiet than the maid of whom I sing ;
 Gentle is the breeze up from the Southland blowing—
 As gentle is the one for whom I pen this offering.

Modest are the violets in my hothouse sleeping—
 But Leila is as modest as all the flowers that blow ;
 Warm the October winds around the gables creeping—
 But warmer is the heart of the little girl I know.

SPRING.

I see her coming from the South,
 With lilacs in her flowing hair,
 And valley lilies in her mouth—
 And, Oh ! she is so fair.

A jacqueminot on either cheek,
 And velvet pansies in her eyes—
 This maiden smiles, demure and meek,
 As winter flies and sighs !

Could he but stay for one more nap,
 And wake, to find so rare a thing
 As things reversed, and in his lap
 This shy, sweet maiden—Spring !

TO ———

So very base are you, that you're exempt
 From ever rousing even poor contempt.

MARY LANG.

Mary Lang, Mary Lang ! there is blood in your face,
 But there's none in your heart, Mary Lang!
 For as cruel are you as the wild men of Thrace,
 With a man underfoot, by the throat—and the grace
 With which you play your part, Mary Lang!

Mary Lang, Mary Lang ! your calm eyes are as cold
 As they'll be when you're dead, Mary Lang!
 Shallow eyes! only blue, calculating and bold—
 There's no depth, and no truth, in them; yet they've controlled
 Many souls that have fled, Mary Lang!

Mary Lang, Mary Lang ! they have told me to-day
 That you're proud of your past, Mary Lang—
 That you smile in your sleep when you dream of the way
 You, the fair potter, molded, then shattered, your clay—
 Laugh! you've molded your last, Mary Lang!

Mary Lang, Mary Lang! scan my face and my eyes!
 Do you find grief, or joy, Mary Lang?
 Grief! grief! grief! from my heart to the gate of God cries,
 Ay! and vengeance on you, with your gold and your lies!
 Where's your tongue? Where's my boy? Mary Lang!

Mary Lang, Mary Lang ! he was mine—he was all—
 All my life—do you hear, Mary Lang?
 Did you hear the sad earth on his coffin-lid fall,
 After he had shot himself out there in your hall—
 Tricked!—by you he held dear, Mary Lang?

Mary Lang, Mary Lang ! I, his mother, now say
 You must die—you must die, Mary Lang!
 You have ruined—deceived, in a merciless way,
 Many men; but you never again shall betray! * * *
 You may rot where you lie, Mary Lang !

AN EPITAPH. ✓

Let this be writ above him at the end :
 With all his faults he never used a friend.

STAR-DUST.

TO MARY ANDERSON.

You are no child of Nature, child of Art:
You cannot touch, until you show, a heart.

TO SARAH BERNHARDT.

A soul is glowing in that slender frame
To guide the ship of everlasting Fame.

TO ROSE EYTINGE.

A queen, in royal purple and in rags—
Simple, sublime: Time sees you—but he lags!

TO ADA REHAN.

Your laugh would make a dying world rejoice:
You speak, and Shandon's Bells are in your voice!

TO ROSE COGHLAN.

When you breathe the words of love, we feel the South—
And see it—in your eyes and on your mouth!

TO JANE HADING.

A face and form to make an artist glad:
A soul and eyes to make a poet mad!

TO ELLEN TERRY.

Puck's playing in a room behind your eyes,
While in your heart the wronged Ophelia sighs.

TO EDWIN BOOTH.

A truer artist does not live to-day;
And Nature seldom turns out finer clay.

TO LAWRENCE BARRETT.

Too hard, too cold, to win enduring fame—
But not to wear a fine, untarnished name.

TO SALVINI.

As tender as a slumber song; and, then,
A tiger—devil—monster—man of men!

TO HENRY IRVING.

You need not envy any king his crown,
For you can be both emperor and clown!

TO JOSEPH JEFFERSON.

What Time will write, I, in my mind's eye, scan:
He was a gentle actor, friend and man.

TO DION BOUCICAULT.

When you appear, we feel an Irish June,
And Shannon's wanton fairies hum a tune!

BARRYMORE'S WIFE.

My Lord Barrymore's wife was as fair and as tall
As the Phryne that stood in Lord Barrymore's hall.

All the gold that she had when he met her down there,
Was the gold in the waves of her wonderful hair.

Far more precious to him than his castle and lands
Was the magnetic touch of her long, slender hands.

He gave her his heart, and his soul, and his life ;
And she gave him her hand—when he first called her wife.

Many months—till he died—it was like a caress
When he heard the frou-frou of her soft, silken dress.

And his love was so great, that his heart wildly beat
At the sound of her voice or the fall of her feet.

Then so selfish he grew, that—he hid her from all!
Not a man in the land ever entered his hall.

But a man in the land, as they rode through the morn,
Watched them both from the hedges and blonde fields of corn.

Did she see, as their chargers walked, trotted or ran,
The white signal and bold, blazing eyes of the man?

Well, Barrymore's horse did—for, one morning, he shied—
And that night in his castle Lord Barrymore died.

It was twelve by the clock, of a midsummer's night,
And Lord Barrymore lay, strong hands folded and white,

On his bier, in the hall; the retainers all slept,
When Lord Barrymore's wife to his side softly crept.

The windows were open—the breeze from the Ayr
Made the gold dance and gleam in her wonderful hair,

As she bent just above him; but not a tear ran
From her eyes to his face. Were her thoughts with the man?

If they were, they were there. Through a window there came
The man! and he cautiously called her by name.

Not a sound could be heard that could make the quick start,
As they stood o'er the dead—hand in hand—heart to heart!

* * * * *

Ere the cocks crew that morn she was lifeless in bed—
And Lord Barrymore lay by her side—stern and dead.

I NOW KNOW WHY.

I now know why the dear gods gave me sight—

Oh, not to see the river-lilies blow;

Ah, not to watch the seasons come and go,

Nor yet to see the jewels of the night.

To see one with the world against one fight

Through weary years and lonely years? Ah, no!

And not to see an iceberg, drifting, glow

Beneath a summer moon's celestial light.

But just because they knew that I would gaze

Upon a star that shines as one through space,

Until my heart grew thick with strangled sighs.

My days are turned to nights, my nights to days:

For, oh, I see the woes of some dead race

Deep down in your miraculous, sad eyes!

PEGGY WOFFINGTON.

Pretty Peggy Woffington, I guess the lark's been soaring
High above old Mother Earth, for half a dozen hours?
It's Sunday morning, Peggy, and the absence of the roaring
In the city's streets below us made me dwell in Dreamland's
bowers.

Lovely Peggy Woffington, with you I have been roaming
Thro' highways and thro' byways, in the wondrous land of
Sleep.
Methought I saw the angels of the Lord your tresses combing,
And methought I saw you dying—heard you whisper: "Do
not weep."

Tender Peggy Woffington, I know you are not dying—
For, here in bed, your liquid orbs are looking into mine;
They've watched for me, those midnight stars, while seven
years were flying—
Where?—no murmur's coming thro' those lips that shame
old wine.

Charming Peggy Woffington, sure, once, your tongue was
glibber—
(When you won the hearts of mortals in London's busy
hive)—
In repartee I know you were a match for Colley Cibber,
And more than a match for Jimmy Quin and artful Kitty
Clive?

Graceful Peggy Woffington, I would that I'd been living,
And an actor, when you brought men to your feet by your
art;
I think we'd have the pleasure, the exquisite bliss of giving—
I mean, showing—on the mimic stage the secrets of the
heart.

Darling Peggy Woffington, I really must be rising—
Close those eyes, dear Margaret, your white lids o'er them
coil.
By you I'm done for, Peggy—but that is not surprising—
Seeing you are hanging on my wall; and you are done—in
oil.

BROKEN HEARTS.✓

There are broken hearts in the world to-day,
 Though smiling faces hide them ;
 They pass and repass on the old highway,
 With stifled grief beside them.
 The wan, white face of the woman who knows
 That she must wander apart
 From the soul where not even pity glows,
 With a proud, but broken, heart.

There are broken hearts in the world to-day,
 Beneath warm furs and laces ;
 Bleak December gnaws at those hearts, though May
 Smiles in the dauntless faces.
 The resolute eyes of the man we see
 By day in the busy mart,
 Look down in the night through his soul, and he
 Looks into a broken heart.

There are broken hearts in the world to-day,
 For all the cynic's laughter ;
 The warm hearts that were red are growing gray,
 Hope fled, and Youth went after.
 But the sun comes up, and the world goes round,
 And all of us play our parts ;
 But over, as well as under, the ground
 There are dead and broken hearts.

LIZETTE.✓

Half the night I'd sit before your picture on my attic wall—
 I was twenty—you were thirty—I was loving, that was all.

Well you know I loved you only, though you never heard my
 sighs—
 Well you knew it, when I kissed you and embraced you—with
 my eyes.

Deeply, too, you made me love you, in a thousand little ways—
 Called me, "friend" and "guide" and "brother"—never
 "sweetheart," in those days.

What had I, but you, to live for? What had you to live for?
Fame.

You had climbed the heights of glory, I had yet to make a
name.

You were courted, flattered, fêted, as the player of the day;
I—a cipher, sad, neglected, and I walked my lonely way.

And I loved you! ah, I loved you! as the moon and stars
well know—

If the winds could tell sad tales of benedictions, soft and low!

Could they breathe of what I breathed to you, up in my attic,
when

I was famishing to hold you—I, the loneliest of men!

But they shall not—for they cannot, as they wander to and
fro * * *

Dear, I never could live over those unhappy years ago.

Yes, I'm thirty—you are forty—fame is mine; I stand with
men;

But, Oh, if I could wear you in my heart, as I did then!

If we could shut out memory—if I could but forget—
My lips would linger longer on—your jeweled *hand*, Lizette.

FROM THE LOWER DEPTHS.

I look at you, my brothers in the swim,
While I waded in the lower depths of art,
And wonder, as my day and eyes grow dim,
How each of you, from youth up, played your part.

Well, I had pearls, too, in this soul of mine;
I wooed and won, and lost, too, in my day.
I got in sadness what I tossed to swine—
And now my soul is going far away.

And yet, I wonder how you reached the sea.
My heart was warm as yours. I hate the shore.
The light that God gave you he gave to me—
And yet to you he must have given more.

SWORD AND EYES.

I do not care to boast of what I've done ;
 Still, I have laid a world of brave men low,
 And placed men up as high as men can go,
 Until they go to God, beyond the sun ;
 And I have for the sons of men worlds won ;
 The souls of many women filled with woe ;
 Changed maps and plans wise men have made—and, Oh!
 The countless cores of hearts through which I've run !

Thou wondrous thing ! implacable as Fate !
 As Time relentless, and as Death serene !
 Not thine the laurel and the haunting rue !
 But ours !—that battered down Troy's royal gate—
 That held Antonious slave to Egypt's queen,
 When o'er the world the Roman eagles flew !

TWO SONGS.

I.

The winds are singing sad lullabies
 Outside of my window there ;
 And I am singing of two blue eyes,
 And the ripple of golden hair.

Could I but sing, as the winds to-night,
 My song would float far and free,
 From this room here, with a wild delight,
 Till she listened and came to me.

But no man living can ever sing
 Like the winds at my window-pane.
 Chant they, as I, for a precious thing
 That will never be theirs again ?

Sing they, as they stray from pole to pole,
 Of Time, and the winds that ran
 Before Life knew that Death was its goal—
 When the world knew nothing of man ?

Do they plead outside, as I have plead
At the door of an empty heart ?
Or, would they come where a heart has bled,
When from one it was torn apart ?

Well, the window's up ! Let them come along
From a world of sorrow and sin :
We will sing together to-night a song
Of to-morrow—come in ! come in !

II.

To-morrow, we'll be happy, you and I ;
To-morrow, not a cloud will dim our sky ;
And our ships afloat afar
Will all cross the harbor bar,
With their royal pennants floating from on high !

To-morrow, you will sing the sweetest song ;
To-morrow, right will reign instead of wrong ;
And souls for souls intended
Will meet within the splendid
Scented bowers that to love alone belong.

To-morrow, love will lead us down the way ;
To-morrow will be fairer than to-day ;
There's a rainbow in the skies
That will gladden weary eyes,
When to-morrow comes, and sorrow holds no sway.

To-morrow, everyone will cease to weep ;
To-morrow, peace into our hearts will creep ;
We'll forgive and we'll forget—
For memory never yet
Followed man into his long and dreamless sleep.

TO A BRILLIANT WRITER.

Your workshop's in your head, and your tools are books and
art ;
My tools are eyes and love, and my shop is in my heart.

THE OLD STROLLER.

He's five-and-fifty, if a day ;
As yet, his hair is iron-gray.
He's clothed in black from head to feet—
In rather shiny black—but neat.
He's rather tall and rather slim,
His eyes are red around the rim.
Those eyes were black when he was young,
And lightning glances flung among
The ladies in their furbelows,
Who saw him in pale passion's throes ;
But now they are a bluish white—
For in them Hope no beacons light.
His hat is high, as is his head :
The man that made the hat is dead
These twenty years. It has no mate—
For, like himself, it's out of date.
Wide and level is its brim,
And, like his hopes, its gloss is dim.
His coat is always buttoned tight ;
His linen's frayed—but then it's white.
His low-cut shoes are wedded to
Grim gaiters, not exactly new.
In sun or shade—in snow or rain—
He twirls a light Malacca cane,
Preoccupied, with thoughts afar,
As his first dreams and great-coat are.
The last-named article he scorns—
At least, his form it ne'er adorns.
His face is bare of hair, and blue
From constant shaving—he is true
To the traditions of his Art !
And yet he has not played a part
(Although he's looked for one through tears)
For five-and-twenty sorry years.
He still hopes on—will, till he's dead,
Through years as empty as his head—
His hollow head, on which are curled
(He thinks) the locks to charm a world,
If he but had a chance to show
The fire within him and the go !
He haunts Broadway from three to six,
And practices his harmless tricks

To catch the managerial eye,
 And then goes home to groan and sigh.
 He sometimes gets a ticket to
 A first performance ; then, if you
 Should pass down to a parquet chair,
 You'd see him, wrapt and posing, where
 There are no seats. He sneers and smiles
 At our degenerate tragic styles ;
 He shrugs his shoulders, flouts at grief,
 And fumes, frets, shudders—gasps, in brief !
 At what the audience calls “soul,”
 Our poor old stroller's weak eyes roll.
 Approach : “Enjoy it, sir, I'm sure ?”
 “Enjoy, be damned, sir ! / ENDURE !”
 “An actor, you ?”—with smile and nod.
 “I played with FORREST, sir, by God !”
 And then he turns, and strides away
 To his bleak room—but does not say
 He played with Forrest in the year
 Of '63, and held a spear,
 And trod the boards behind a shield,
 On Bosworth's bloody, famous field,
 Among grim Richard's battered troops,
 When he was captain of the “supes.”

Poor fellow ! Leave him to his dream :
 He's drifting down the hackneyed stream
 Of life in such a leaky boat
 That he can barely keep afloat.
 And if he wears with pride a rose
 He never plucked—what then ? God knows
 That he believes to be a fact
 That he did once with Forrest *act*.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF IT.

A man must follow his heart, my dear,
 And I must follow mine,
 Until it's parcel and part, my dear,
 Of thine.

A man must follow his heart, my love,
 When it leaps from his breast,
 And seeks, with passion and art, my love,
 For rest.

A man must follow his heart, sweetheart,
 Night and day ; for, in short,
 Man without heart is a part, sweetheart,
 Of naught.

ENVY. X

He fought for his place up there, and well ;
 But he hasn't yet reached the crown.
 Before he does, let us yelp and yell—
 And pull him down !

He is as sensitive as a girl—
 Let's call him a quarrelsome clown !
 Let's call him an ass—an ill-bred churl—
 And pull him down !

Let's say his past is rather obscure—
 That he hasn't a friend in town ;
 And then, I think, we are rather sure
 To pull him down !

Let's say that his best ideas belong
 To women and men of renown !
 We'll weaken the heart he thinks so strong—
 We'll drag him down !

We can shake hands with him when we meet,
 Without envious sneer or frown ;
 But when we leave him there in the street—
 Down with him !—down !

MOCK MODESTY.

You ought to hear the wise old ravens croak,
 When Vanity assumes a modest cloak !

THE MUMMY.

I stood in the Museum, face to face
 With her who had been dead three thousand years ;
 And, as I gazed, I saw ten thousand spears,
 Held by ten thousand men of her great race,
 Sway in the morning sun. A little space,
 And she appeared. Ten thousand mighty cheers
 Rolled upward to, and far beyond, the spheres,
 Rocking the awful Sphinx from crown to base !

So glorious she was, I held my breath !
 As proud as Pharaoh on his throne of gold,
 She backed her royal war-horse. Did I dream ?
 No ! I do swear that down those eyes of death
 I saw the Egypt of the past unrolled—
 I saw her soul within those caverns gleam !

THE PESSIMIST. X

The rich man loves the millions he has won :
 The poor man loves his children and his wife :
 The poor condemned loves freedom and his life :
 The believer loves his God and God's dear Son :

The sunflower loves the west when day is done :
 The soldier dearly loves, not peace, but strife :
 The coquette loves to wield the phantom knife
 That through a thousand hearts will deftly run.

I love not all of these, nor any part ;
 I love not wine or woman, wealth or song ;
 I love not wife, or life, or children's breath—
 For none loves me. But I love in my heart
 (I may be right in loving, may be wrong)
 Delicious sleep and its dear brother, Death.

TO MAURICE BARRYMORE.

Two lines to you, who know so many lines—
 Of others?—Wait until my sweet Muse dines !

DORCAS.

But yesterday, it seems to me,
I saw her race across the Park ;
And now I nevermore shall see
Her glossy coat, nor hear her free
And honest, joyous bark.

For thirteen years, through this old town,
She reigned, a beauty, night and day.
Just by her grace she won renown ;
Drawn by the soft light in her brown,
True eyes, friends came to stay.

She seemed, in truth, to understand
The actor's art and where it led ;
And every actor in the land
Had laid a light and loving hand
Upon her handsome head.

A thinker's life hers was, I know ;
She surely thought life sad and droll :
She dreamed and reasoned—loved, and so
Human was, withal—as though
She had, in truth, a soul !

Her love was perfect. Dogs' love is
The only perfect love on earth.
Dogs ask—for what ? Why, only this :
To let them love. That's all. That's bliss—
To let them love from birth.

You're wronged or beaten by your friend ;
You love a woman—till she lies.
You hate them to the bitter end,
And both their souls to hell would send :
A dog loves till it dies.

You stick a knife in your friend's heart :
He'll curse you with his dying breath.
But use the inquisition's art
Upon your dog—he'll try to start
To lick your hand ere death.

THERE ARE BUT TWO THINGS TRUE.

There are but two things true, dear,
 Since time began to run
 His wondrous race right through, dear,
 The world and round the sun ;
 And these two things so sweet, dear,
 I'll sing while I'm above
 The grass beneath my feet, dear :
 Truth and Love !

There are but two things sweet, dear,
 Forever and a day—
 For man is incomplete, dear,
 And all things pass away ;
 But these two things I sing, dear,
 Are ever as our youth ;
 They to the old world cling, dear :
 Love and Truth !

They flourish even now, dear,
 In spite of lies and death.
 I see truth on your brow, dear,
 And love is in my breath ;
 And love will be with truth, dear,
 And truth will be with love,
 Till we renew our youth, dear,
 Up—above.

PHŒBE HELENA.

[BURIED IN TRINITY CHURCHYARD.]

Phœbe Helena, there you lie, in one of life's suburbs, across
 the street.
 What care you, if the snowflakes fly, or dead leaves fall at your
 feet ?
 Little you know of the storms that blow over the world to-
 day—
 And less you care : be it foul or fair, it matters not over the
 way.

Phœbe Helena, I see you, with a lovely, inexpressible charm
 In your shy, sweet eyes, gliding through the dance, on Wash-
 ington's arm.
 As red a rose in your pale cheek glows as the one on your
 breast ;
 For George the First, whom the redcoats cursed, your hand
 and waist has caressed.

Phœbe Helena, ninety years have passed through the world
 since you broke a heart—
 Ninety years, of laughter and tears, in which you have had no
 part.
 You broke no heart by the coquette's art, but by folding your
 hands
 On your white gown, and leaving the town, forever, for other
 lands.

Phœbe Helena—ah ! my dear, your life, I am sure, was a
 saintly one :
 You, I know, had nothing to fear when your light went out
 with the sun.
 Perhaps, up there, where the winds are fair, you are the virgin
 queen
 You were that day, in the month of May, when they crowned
 you on Bowling Green.

Phœbe Helena, I can see the little gray stone at your dream-
 less head.
 Where does your sweetheart lie ? Ah, me ! nobody knows, it
 is said.
 Sleep on, sleep on—you may meet anon ! “ Phœbe,” he then
 may say,
 “All through these years, I have looked through tears to lead
 you—from over the way !”

TO A POET.

You are the greater poet to-night :
 Your laurel wreath I ne'er shall steal :
 For you imagine what you write—
 I only feel.

THE WORST OF IT.

This is the worst of it : When the gabled house
 Is quite as quiet as a quiet mouse,
 And the deserted street (where, to and fro,
 By day, the horse and passer come and go)
 Is quite as lonely as the dead that lie
 On lonely crags beneath an Arctic sky,—
 Then does the muse of poesy and art
 Knock at the panels of my swelling heart ;
 And open fly the doors of heart and brain ;
 And I can hear the ripple of the rain
 On leaves and meadows green—the roaring sea—
 The airs they play in far-off Arcady—
 The booming bees round honeysuckles lush ;
 The sad, sweet song of some abandoned thrush ;
 And up before my startled eyes arise
 The jasper walls enclosing Paradise :
 I hear the song that's sung by brook and stream,
 And yesterday's forgotten in a dream
 Of such ineffable, intense delight,
 That I do wish it were forever night.
 Then how the hands upon the dial creep !
 And men who wield barbaric pens must sleep.

THE PRIMA DONNA'S SWEETEST SONG.

*They heard me sing last night, and they went wild—
 They never heard me sing to my dear child !
 They only know what masters taught me—Art :
 This song comes welling from a swelling heart.*

Lay thy head—so—close to my breast.
 The brook in the valley the river shall be ;
 The beautiful river shall rush to the west,
 Till it proudly and fearlessly leaps to the sea !
 Little one, sleep !
 Would I could keep
 Thee ever—forever—my treasure and joy !
 Thou, dear, may go
 Like the brook ; so,
 I'll lose in the wide sea my dear little boy.

Cling to me, dear, with chubby hands.
 What's in the nests where the bitter winds blow?
 The birdies are singing in faraway lands,
 And the nests in the tree-tops are covered with snow.
 What do they care
 How the nests fare,
 While singing and winging and swinging for joy?
 Why do I feel
 From my heart steal
 The tear-drops that fall on my dear little boy?

What will I do when the winds blow
 The snows of the oncoming years to my head,
 If I, dear, must grope down the hillside, where grow
 The weeds and the thorns when the roses are dead?
 Ah, dear, will I—
 If thou art by—
 Just fondly and foolishly my love employ
 To have and hold,
 When I am old,
 The heart of my dear little copper-toed boy!

Dream, baby, dream—it's nearly day.
 Why dost thou laugh so, and crow in thy sleep?
 Dost thou see babies, dear, over the way,
 In the wee land where only wee babies can creep?
 Or, dost thou, dear,
 Laugh at my fear?
 Wouldst thou have me, sweetheart, the picture destroy?
 How the winds blow!
 Closer—let's go
 Together to dreamland, my dear little boy!

THE DIFFERENCE

BALZAC.

Verse I despise! In prose I'll live and die.

GAUTIER.

The lark can walk—but can the lion fly?

THE INN.

There's an Inn without a sign
Creaking in the wanton wind
Asking wayfarers to dine.
But still, they come and they go,
Like the roses and the snow.
Some, when parting, leave behind
The soft fragrance, as of wine,
That true lovers only know.

There are some that come to stay ;
Others, through a night and day :
Others, when they go away,
Leave such sorrow in the rooms
That the subtlest of perfumes
Cannot woo the wholesome airs
Through the windows, up the stairs :

And the keeper of the Inn
Feels as if the demon, Sin,
Were his uninvited guest.
And he knows not joy, nor rest,
Until, down the road, he sees
(Where the bushes and the trees
Seem to bend to kiss the grass)
Happy travelers, all bent
Upon making him content.

When they enter, sorrows pass ;
Care is racing with the wind,
And for days he never sighs.
Thus he lives, and hopes, and tries
To keep out grief, pain and sin
From the wondrous little Inn
Just behind his brows and eyes.

TO FREDERICK BARNARD.

You wizard of the pencil and the brush,
Why don't you sketch the tolling of a bell ?
Or, paint the song of nightingale, or thrush,
To please the shades of little Paul and Nell !

IF I COULD BE FAMOUS.

If I could be famous, this is what I would do :
Sing and whistle like the sea and gale the good night through.
 Hold you, sing and listen, dear,
 To lonely winds that croon ;
 Watch the snowfields glisten, dear,
 Out underneath the moon.

If I could be famous, this is what I would do :
Tell the world the tales I read down in your eyes of blue—
 Sing the tales I read there, sweet
 (But not for worlds to know—
 Just to sow the seed there, sweet,
 That love and faith might grow).

If I could be famous, this is what I would do :
Love the ones that love me now, and prove it to them, too !
 Pardon those that flout me now,
 Because I needs must sing ;
 Give the ones about me now
 My heart—or anything.

If I could be famous, this is what I would do :
I would philosophically my past life review.
 I should like to do it now,
 In this old attic here ;
 But I know I'd rue it now,
 If I should try, my dear.

If I could be famous, this is what I would do :
Give the milk-and-watery world songs that would be new !
 Songs with richer blood in them
 Than any I have sung ;
 Songs with the strong flood in them
 That lashed my heart when young.

If I could be famous, this is what I would do :
Make every day a long summer Sabbath-day to you.
 You would form and my heart take,
 And softly call my name,
 Nor ever make my heart break
 From that old tarnished frame.

THE OAK AND THE REED.

A reed was piping a dainty song
In the shade of a lordly oak,
One summer day, when the timid breeze
Bent grasses and reeds, but not the trees;
And it sang all day and all the night long,
But the oak never stirred, nor spoke.

Through the summer it sang its pretty lays
Whenever the soft breezes blew.
One day, it lifted its fragile head,
And sang to the oak—or, rather, said :
“I sing through the nights, and I sing through days—
I’m a greater singer than you.”

That night the wind blew out of the north,
And the reed was broken and dead.
The wind howled, raved, and then, with a roar,
It rushed through the world as never before,
And the soul of Byron came thundering forth
From the oak’s mighty heart and head !

TO JOHN SWINTON.

And so the good ship’s going down at last, John ?
Well, let her go—you did your very best !
But nail your colors to the mizzen mast, John,
And disappear with some robust, grim jest !
I know that war’s no laughing matter, too, John ;
But, having fought and failed to bear the bell,
What is there else in manliness to do, John,
But hurl defiance at one’s foes—and yell ?

Beneath your banner I have sailed for years, John—
And a better captain never trod a deck !
No heart that ever beat knew less of fears, John,
Than the one beneath your grizzled throat and neck !
Nor soul that ever flew on viewless wings, John,
From a pigmy shell of clay to lands above,
Was ever filled with broader, human things, John,
For the sons of men whom Christ and angels love.

It's been rough sailing from the very first, John :
 The little ship ne'er skimmed the summer seas.
 By privateers and storms it has been cursed, John,
 While tubs and leaky shallops ride at ease—
 With venal men and shallow in command, John,
 Who strive to follow in great captains' wakes ;
 But they never sail so very far from land, John,
 That they can't put in and call for ale and cakes.

The little ship bore pearls, too, I am sure, John,
 On every voyage in the stormy past,
 Which were not seized upon and made secure, John :
 But pearls should be discriminately cast.
 You know, I know, when all is said and done, John,
 That you fought the fight, not for yourself—for those
 Who need a captain, as earth does the sun, John,
 To steer them into Port ere life's days close.

Well, let her go ! You did your very best, John,
 And made no noise about it—*that* is best.
 They can say, when your life's sun goes down the West,
 John,
 There's a big and juicy heart that's gone to rest.
 But will they ? Not with truth, I am afraid, John,
 If they wring it, crush it, and peck at it, too :
 For you wear it on your sleeve in sun and shade, John,
 And jackdaws are a miserable crew !

WHAT SHALL I SING?

Sing ! Sing !
 What shall I sing ?
 Sing of the rose—
 Sing of the snows—
 And sing of the wild wind that through the night blows.
 Sing of the rose that withers and dies—
 Sing of the false beacon light in her eyes ;
 Sing of the present—sing of the past ;
 Sing of our childhood, too lovely to last ;
 Sing of the snows that fell when the year
 Was dead, and the wind sang a dirge o'er its bier.

Sing ! Sing !
What shall I sing ?
Sing of the brave—
Sing of a grave
Deep down in a heart over which tempests rave.
Sing of the brave that live through the fight
Waged against conscience and fate day and night ;
Then sing of the right—sing of the wrong ;
Let the buds in your soul blossom in song ;
Sing of the lowly—sing of the great—
And so go up singing to God's golden gate !

I ONLY KNOW.

I only know, when e'er I go
Up to and down the market-place,
I see her two wide eyes of blue,
And her adorable, sweet face.
Although her smiles are many miles
Away from my world and from me,
She's very near—she's living here,
Within my heart eternally.

I only know mad currents flow
Around and into my sad heart,
Because that star is not so far
Away as we two are apart.
I only know I love her so
That I would kiss her two white feet ;
And this I know, and this I know :
Without her life is incomplete.

I only know I love her so
That Paradise, without her hand
In mine, to me would ever be
A sad and lonely, silent land.
Could I not feel her soft breath steal
Across my face, I'd wander through
The land of peace with grief, nor cease
For my lost love from God to sue.

JUST A THOUGHT.

In Shakespeare's time, men used to gaze—
 But few upon his face :
 They gave the long-dead poets praise :
 He died to find his place.

Some day, these days will go their ways,
 And men will say : " Ah, me !
 They sang much sweeter in the days
 That knew not me and thee."

Those days will pass, and others come,
 And with them poets, too :
 But till the sea and hills are dumb
 We'll praise the old, not new.

How very few sing—till they die,
 And soar to some far star !
 Does Johnny Keats know, furlongs high,
 What hypocrites we are ?

THE KNIGHT'S STORY.

" She was young, and as fair as the fairest of Mother Eve's
 daughters ;
 Over her shoulders there hung glossy masses of soft,
 tawny hair ;
 Her eyes were blue and as deep as the bluest and deepest
 of waters,
 And her smile was sunny and sweet as her tears were
 crystal and rare.

" Her soul was pure as the snow that flies through the air in
 December :
 - It looked through her marvelous eyes like the moon
 through a rift in a cloud ;
 It purified mine for all time, one morning in golden
 September,
 When we met in a deep forest aisle, far away from the
 mean, sordid crowd.

“ Kind fate must have sent me her way, for her riderless
palfrey was dying ;
Two merciless arrows were sunk to the head in his
quivering hide.
Her captors I clove to the chin, and sent their black souls
hellward flying,
Then placed her on my charger's back, and dreamily
walked by her side.

“ She said while life lasted she'd think and pray for me
fervently, daily ;
That her mother was dead ; that her sire—the Baron—
was brutal and bold ;
That from childhood her heart and her hand had been
pledged (she tried to speak gaily)—
But she paused—then she sighed—then she wept—and I
felt my stout heart growing cold.

“ She never had loved him, she said—the knight to whom her
troth was plighted ;
He was cruel and crafty, and love could ne'er find a place
in his soul ;
But her sire had willed it ; and so her life, fresh and pure,
would be blighted.
'Twas written, she murmured, that she should ne'er reach
a fond maiden's goal.

“ ‘ And what is a fond maiden's goal ? ’ whispered I, with a
heart wildly beating :
‘ Is it not fond heart and true beating time 'neath a
gallant knight's crest ? ’
‘ Oh, my king ! ’—that was all—but our lips, hers and mine,
in rapture were meeting :
There we stood—my charger hard by—lips to lips, eye to
eye, breast to breast !

“ A new and a better life dawned for us both in that glad
autumn weather ;
Love, that keeps hearts ever young, had come into both
of our lives.
And I said to my love, as we stood at the edge of the forest
together :
‘ I'll soon ride to yon castle to claim my jewel—my sweet
wife of wives ! ’

“Many a proud lance I shattered, and many a rider unseated,
Ere I saw the minarets rise o’er the home of the queen
of my heart.

In the courtyard the Baron I met—to him the old tale I
repeated :

The tale I had told to my love—the old tale that is
older than art !

“My daughter, Sir Knight, thou hast saved from a sad fate
that passeth all telling ;

Thy reward shall be great as thy deed—thy reward as
great as thou’rt bold ;

Ere the bell in yon turret rings out high noon o’er my
ancestors’ dwelling—

The reward shall be thine—not her hand—but her weight
in the brightest of gold !’

“Out flew my blade from its scabbard ! my soul and my
brain were afire !

The dastardly insult was borne, so it seemed, over
mountains and seas !

What was it prevented my blade from sending his craven
soul higher

Than ever o’er this earth it soared ? My Empress—his
child—on her knees !

“There she knelt, in the courtyard : her eyes were fixed upon
mine, mute and pleading ;

I felt the hot fires of shame rushing up from my heart to
my cheek !

My scabbardless, bright blade I sheathed—took the path to
the old forest leading—

Rode away like a man in a dream ; for her look made my
wild spirit meek.

“I rode till the pale stars looked down upon earth from their
places in heaven :

Then I spoke to my charger—he turned his head with a
neigh to the right.

Rode I on till the leagues in my rear numbered five—
numbered six—numbered seven !

The walls of the castle I scaled—found my love in the
hush of the night !

“ The sea, in the moonlight, was calm ; from her bower we
heard the waves murmur

A dirge for the souls underneath, or a pæan for joys yet
to be.

As we stole through the courtyard, her heart seemed to
grow, with her hand and step, firmer—

Till the bell in the turret rang out, ‘Alas!’—for my
sweet love and me !

“ I fought !—what is one blade to ten, be it ever so stout or
so trusty ?

In a room overlooking the sea—a room with four bear
walls of stone—

I, the victor in hundreds of fights—I, the famous, the bold
and the lusty—

Lay a weak captive, all wounds—and, my God ! Oh, my
God ! not alone !

“ At my side was the light of my life—the fairest of Mother
Eve’s daughters ;

‘How long have we been here?’ breathed I ; two days
ere I opened mine eyes !

The door ! walled up ! To the window I crawled : beneath,
ragged rocks and huge waters !

Beneath us, the ravenous sea ; and, above us, the far-
away skies !

“ Day followed night, and the cheek of my heart’s treasure
daily grew thinner.

Oh ! the iron went deep in my soul as I saw my love fad-
ing away.

Oh ! I wept tears of blood when I saw grim Death coming
in a sure winner—

When I felt that her soul would be his ere the dawning
of cold Christmas Day !

“ She was starving and freezing ! Six days had we lived in
the dungeon together ;

No voices but ours, and the seas, and the winds, ever
gladdened our ears.

A gull to our window once came—flew away ere I touched
one white feather ;

There was nothing to do but await the approach of gay
Youth’s king of fears.

“ She crept to my arms on the morn when over the world
 chimes were ringing,
 And sighed : ‘ O my King ! it hath come ; let me sleep
 —in thy arms let me rest !
 I can hear o’er the wandering sea the voices of God’s
 angels singing.’ ” * * *
 So they died, in the spring of their lives—lips to lips, soul
 to soul, breast to breast !

OLD AGE.

When our ankles grow thick ; when our feet grow flat ;
 When our teeth and skin take a yellowish tinge ;
 When the face in the mirror which we look at
 Makes us turn away ; when each separate hinge
 In our legs, arms and back begins to squeak
 When a storm is twenty-four hours away ;
 When nobody ever expects us to speak ;
 When we’re sleepless at night ; when we doze through
 the day ;
 When our hair and our lips and noses grow thin ;
 When our eyes grow dim, and the pupils are wide—
 And the rings round the pupils grow white as the skin
 On the neck or the arm of a beautiful bride ;
 When no interest we take in men or in books ;
 When a sweet lady’s smile is nothing to us ;
 When we shun the crowd, and seek quiet nooks ;
 When we hate the boisterous—frivolous ;
 When we never laugh ; when we seldom smile ;
 When the blood in our bodies grows cold—and pales ;
 When our voices are thin as the tones of a file ;
 When our fingers grow big, and whitish their nails ;
 When our youth seems as far away as the stars ;
 When we pity youth, on account of the page
 It has yet to read—on account of the scars
 It’s heart must bear—*that* is old age.

TO A POET.

He jealous of you ? and envious, too ! Tush !
 Does the North Wind envy a piping thrush ?

THE HUNCHBACK.

Why should I weep for her? Why should I die for her?

Why should I live for her, now that I know
I am nothing to her? Soon I shall lie for her,
Although I'm naught to her, under the snow.

Oh, how I've worshiped her! Ah, how I've longed for her!

What is my wealth to me? What is the world?
What is my God to me? He whom I've wronged for her—
He who gave me a soul, like my back, curled!

Oh, if He'd given me but a fair form and face,

Would I have drunk to-night what I have drunk?
Would I not have been first where I'm last in the race
Would my soul to the size of a walnut have shrunk?
My soul, that was white as a star ere I met her!

My heart, that curled up like this load on my back,
When I flung myself down like a whipped hound, and let her
Put her foot on that heart and that soul on the rack!

Ah, and she did it so gracefully—womanly!

With that pitying look in her beautiful eyes;
Just like a woman—so tenderly—humanly—
Oh, my God! how my body and soul I despise!
Why was I given this brain with this mountain—why?
Does man ever ask—does he wish—to be born?
I, who should live till I've sucked life's sweet fountain dry,
Will be naught but a hideous clod in the morn!

Oh, how I've starved to touch her regal tresses!

Oh, the long miles from her hand to her mouth!
For one of her womanly, tender caresses
I famish as flowers do during a drouth.
I have groveled, and kissed the ground that she treaded—
Touched my lips to the hem of a dress she once wore,
Till the iron of grief is so deeply imbedded
In my heart that its rust's eaten in to the core!

THE WOULD-BE GENTLEMAN.

He'd pass for what he is not, but he fails;
His face, voice, eyes, and every act, tell tales.

IN A LOOKING-GLASS.

The tree forsakes not the leaf,
 Nor the bush the rose ;
 Nor the meadow and valley and hillside and field the clover
 and grass.

And love, as life, is so brief,
 That it comes and goes—
 Ah, whence ? and ah, whither ? Oh, speak to me now, stony
 face in the glass !

The woods forsake not the birds,
 Nor the sun the earth ;
 Nor the earth the miraculous stars on the shores of infinite
 space.

What to the dying are words ?
 Will they know at birth ?
 Did I hear you speak ? Will I hear your voice ? Did I know,
 will I know, your face ?

Ah, heart that has touched my heart !
 Wide eyes, where I saw
 Wet eyes, warm mouth, adoration, idolatry, trust, through a
 long day !

Heart, did we touch but to part !
 Must I bow to a law
 As old as the planets and mountains, and tides that may bear
 me away ?

IN MEMORIAM.

She went with winter from this land of ours :
 She crossed her hands upon her gentle breast,
 When April, with her singing, silvery showers,
 Sang through her soul the lullaby of rest.

She was so very young to go away
 Upon that sad and lonely road and long,
 Where all who live must pass, some night—some day :
 The good, the bad, the wise, the weak, the strong.

Her life was very modest, pure and sweet :
 She was so true unto herself and God,
 That, ere her life was rounded and complete,
 She saw, and felt, and kissed his golden rod.

O ! winds, that blow across the hills she knew,
 Touch all the buds and blossoms as you go
 From here to far Grenada, and there strew
 Upon her grave the sweetest flowers that grow.

Go sighing through the land from pole to pole,
 But sing your sweetest song above her bed,
 There, in the tropic earth ; then backward roll
 To us from that far city of the dead :

And wander through each room she loved so much
 Within the house, within the dear old park—
 Across the organ's keys, with loving touch,
 And send her favorite ballads through the dark.

WAYFARERS.

There, lean thou on me !
 For thou art weak and I am strong :
 The way and night are dark and long,
 And we have traveled far ; and we
 Must journey on and on. Be not afraid !
 Bear thy full weight upon my arm.
 To thee nor me shall come no harm
 From man or beast. Be undismayed.
 The sun is shining down the road.
 I know a rainbow spans the sky
 Where thou and I shall lay our load
 Down, thankfully, and die.
 We will be happy with the dead :
 No journeys there through night and storm—
 But peace and rest ; no care ; no dread
 'Twixt earth beneath and grass o'erhead—
 Just dreamless rest ! So, lean thy form,
 As thou hast done for sorry years,
 Against mine—so ! Doushka, thy tears
 Are happy ones, I know. Here we will rest—
 For life is good, but death is best !

THE SAVANT.

You read the stars beyond the shores of space ;
 You read the tides that ever come and go ;
 You know from whence to where the wild winds blow ;
 You know mankind, from Mother Earth to face ;
 You know the joys, ills, of the human race,
 Since Babylon the Mighty's day of woe ;
 You know how hates, loves, passions, all things, grow—
 And the First Cause you one day hope to trace.

You know as much as any man alive,
 By laboring from morn to noon of night,
 And loving nature, science, books and art.
 You have been loved and you have loved : but, strive
 Howe'er you may, you cannot read aright
 The text within a woman's wondrous heart !

THE FIRST POET.

Far back in the dim cavities of Time,
 Ere Solomon sang his song of songs divine ;
 Ten thousand years ere Homer wrote a line,
 Or Persian poet wove his dreams in rhyme ;
 Or Sappho loved, and sang in drowsy clime
 Love songs as warm as red Falernian wine,
 There soared a poet close to heaven's shrine,
 Whose song was most delicious and sublime.

Down to a meadow in a storied land
 This poet came, from whence no man may know,
 With liquid poems swelling in his throat.
 From there he soared away towards heaven, and
 His song before, behind, him, to and fro,
 Beneath, above, through God's own gate, did float !

IDEAS.

He is indeed a swimmer bold and free
 Who breasts the waves upon Thought's mighty sea.

I KNOW.

I know
 Where golden apples grow !
 Out where
 The winds and skies are fair,
 I dream,
 By ribald brook and stream,
 Of years
 To come in other spheres,
 And hear
 The clover in my ear
 Breathe—tell
 In velvet tones of how it loves the asphodel !

I know
 Where golden apples grow !
 Where birds
 Tell tales—but not in words—
 When day
 Is going far away ;
 And then
 I'm back in haunts of men,
 To strive
 To keep my heart alive,
 And trust,
 In song, to find that golden apples are not dust.

A REMINISCENCE.

I.

A knight of old told me the story :
 He lived in braver, wilder times,
 And lances broke, for love and glory,
 Before quaint Chaucer wrote quaint rhymes.

II.

He found her singing, in the crowded mart,
 Before a brutal, swart and unclean mob,
 A song that touched his rough but knightly heart—
 For through it subtly ran a maiden's sob !

The song brought up before his mental eye
The rivers, hills and valleys of his youth—
His playmates, some of whom beyond the sky
Ere then, perhaps, had solved a mighty truth.

As on she sang, he felt the liquid pearls
Steal to eyes that had not filled with tears
Since his keen lance had clove the golden curls
Of Chastelnaye, the prince of cavaliers.

As monks around Hypatia, surged the brutes
Around the maiden, weak from want and fright.
Then, as a thunderbolt from heaven shoots,
Shot through the crowd the charger of the knight !

He lightly swung her to his saddle bow—
His charger's hoofs were dyed with swinish blood ;
Then heart to heart away they southward go,
Far from the dead and dying in the mud.

Rode they leagues, until this uncrowned king
Drew rein before his granite castle walls ;
And, ere the rivers rippled songs to spring,
The maiden walked, his queen, through knightly halls.

He laid his heart and riches at her feet ;
He taught her all a royal dame should know ;
He loved her fondly—wooed her as the sweet
Southern winds woo daisies through the snow.

And he was very patient when she'd frown—
As frown she would, when he would her caress—
When she was quite impatient to kneel down,
And to the Abbé all her sins confess.

She'd count the minutes till the Abbé came
To shrive her of her weekly little sins.
A sleek and oily creature he, and lame—
But powerful withal. His sturdy shins

Uncovered were beneath his rusty cloak's
Folds. Shoulders, broad ; neck, like columned brass.
His arms were knotted like wind-tossed oak's ;
His skin was tough as hide upon an ass.

And yet this fond knight's dame would kneel to him,
 Where laymen's eyes could never penetrate ;
 And her sweet eyes at twilight would be dim
 When they watched the Abbé leave the castle gate.

Lie still ! The knight who plucked her from the mud
 Left her where he'd found her ; and her charms
 Were covered with the holy Abbé's blood :
 He left her dead in the dead Abbé's arms.

III.

A knight of old told me the story ;
 He stood beside my dreaming head
 Last night—then melted in the glory
 Of the old moon that bathed my bed.

THE EARTH.

Since from a world of vapor I took form,
 A loving mother I have been to man.
 Around the lordly sun I never ran,
 By night, by day, in sunshine or in storm,
 When my loved children did not delve and swarm
 Into and underneath my breast, and plan
 A million ways to rob me, and to scan
 My golden arteries and heart so warm.

And I have patient been—endured it all.
 Some day I know my heart is bound to break—
 That heart so many leagues beneath the sod.
 Ah, then my cruel sons I will appal—
 For just one second after I awake—
 And I will only love my Master, God !

LESTER WALLACK.

The prince of point-lace comedy is dead.
 The curtain's down—he played a royal part.
 Old Time and Winter only touched his head :
 He went with Youth and Summer in his heart !

A DIRGE.

Dead ! Dead ! Dead !
I have no tear to drop above your bier ;
My heart is dry ; I stand with tearless eye
Above your dreamless head,
In the noiseless City of the happy dead.

Alive, you went on singing down the way
In sunshine and in storm ;
Before you ever gleamed a golden day,
Because your heart was warm ;
Because a thousand birds sang in your brain,
A thousand thousand in your dauntless soul ;
Because you never stained that soul to gain
The goal.

And lesser men outran you in the race,
Because you would not stoop ;
And then your heart grew gray, and white your face,
And you began to droop—
As river lilies droop when streams run dry :
So, with a sigh,
You left the highway for the wood,
To die.
Rest ! Rest ! Rest !
This immortelle I place above your breast.
I wonder so if all is for the best !

AT THREE-SCORE.

I live in a quiet street,
Far away from friend and foe ;
But up to my still retreat
Troop the days of years ago,
And faces I knew and know,
Which belonged to hearts that beat
With a fierce or tender glow,
As warmly as beat the sun
In my heart when twenty-one.

Now, there are the eyes of blue,
 In whose depths I once saw mine ;
 And there is the man I slew,
 Who robbed me of love divine—
 For whose heart she would mine resign,
 When, deep in her heart, she knew
 My love was as warm as the wine
 We sipped when the day was done,
 When we both were twenty-one.

And here is the wild, black night—
 And here is the lonely grave—
 And there is the slab of white—
 But here is my friend ! As brave
 As e'er slit the throat of knave
 In battle or tavern fight,
 And then sang a reckless stave
 Of a song, but half begun,
 When he died, at twenty-one.

Here are the dreams and the days
 Of the adolescent times,
 When I trod the royal ways
 Of life, like glorious rhymes,
 When, wedded to silver chimes,
 They soar for the angels' praise,
 On an Easter Morn, when climbs
 From the East the eager sun—
 As bright as at twenty-one !

And there are the friends I lost—
 And here are the foes, long dead.

* * * *

Oh ! my soul is tempest-tossed
 In a raging sea of red !
 And despair, and grief, and dread,
 Have over my threshold crossed—
 And I bend my old gray head.

* * * *

I know, as the hot tears run,
 That I died at twenty-one.

KISMET.

I blame not God for one ill I have known ;
 Nor for the storms that rave within my soul ;
 Nor yet because I will not reach the goal
 I see far up the height, white and alone ;
 Nor yet because all through long nights I moan,
 And through long years, like winds around the pole ;
 Nor yet because I've heard the thunder roll
 All through my life, since my birth-night has flown.

But I do blame my tyrant star, which glows,
 Up there, white, still, implacable, serene,
 Just as it glowed the night death tolled her knell :
 And could I reach it on this gale that blows
 So madly by, I would clutch it in between
 These bony hands and hurl it down to hell !

THE CAVALIER.

In many bosoms my true sword hath been ;
 In many lands I've watched the dying day ;
 In many inns drunk anjou and tokay,
 And many women kissed, both stout and lean.
 I've fought for king and country and the queen ;
 To gain my ends I've found or made a way.
 Nor have I sought or shirked a bloody fray
 Since the sod and heaven I was cast between.

And yet you see the hot tears in my eyes ;
 For I have loved the fairest of her sex,
 And have been loved by her, O, God ! until
 I dreamed I walked through fields in paradise ;
 Until I saw two kiss each other's necks—
 (She's dead, he's dying) back there in Seville !

SMALL PEOPLE.

When Nature turns a human sparrow out,
 A sparrow's soul she gives him, beyond doubt.

A SONG IN THE WOODS.

If the world were long, instead of round, I'd find thee,
For thou livest somewhere 'twixt the sky and sod ;
And with love's strong tendrils to my heart I'd bind thee :
Thou wouldst rule me with a smile and golden rod,
And we'd live forever in the Spanish castle
I erected in an adolescent dream—
In which I, thy humble and most loving vassal,
Knelt before thy throne in loyalty supreme.

If the world were long, instead of round, I'd find thee,
And would woo and win thee through a summer's day.
If the summer lightning in love's eyes should blind thee,
I would lead thee down love's flower-scented way ;
And the forest minstrels through the azure winging
We would follow to the primrose-covered goal,
And would dream our lives away while they were singing
The sweet, wordless songs that elevate the soul !

If the world were long, instead of round, I'd find thee—
And I'd know thee if I met thee in the dark !
I would never deign to doubt or look behind thee,
For my soul would upward soar—like yonder lark !
But, alas ! I'm in the forest groping blindly—
And, Oh ! where art thou ? We may be world's apart !
There is One who knows : He leads His children kindly,
And to-morrow He may bring us heart to heart !

IN KANSAS.

A morning in June ! O'er a Kansas plain
Dark shot, I on his back, like a rocket ;
A tempest in heart, in soul and in brain—
And Johnny Keats in my pocket.

Nothing above but the fathomless blue—
Nothing below but the sweet, swaying grass ;
Nothing before but space, and those two
False eyes of that wanton, alas !

Dark galloped, I on his back, toward the west,
With red, wide nostril and fluttering flank.
Ten leagues—bridle off—saddle off—rest,
And we lay on a stream-kissed bank.

So ! far away from the woman I love—
Ten good leagues from her I despise ;
Nothing there but the river. Above,
The skies—and her treacherous eyes !

I am far away from her—yes, thank God !
For nothing I hear but the brown bees' hum ;
Dark, my friend, at my knees, on the sod—
He is true and grateful, though dumb :

While she should have died at her birth, and then—
One wanton the less in this sad, mad world !
He whom I killed was the worst of men—
Was he not, Dark ? No ? But he hurled

Such confident, ribald words in my teeth—
And hot from her arms, too ! Dark, I was mad.
Yes, *she* should have died, back there, beneath
The trees on the old Esplanade.

But she is alive. Well, Dark, what care I,
When I see love in your brown eye's socket ?
Before me, the world ! Let's go. I sigh ?
With Johnny Keats in my pocket ?

THE GLADIATOR.

Oh, Lord, how long, how long
Ere I subdue my heart as I do men !
Oh, Lord, you made me strong—
To fight my brothers in this Roman pen !

But she, up there, so sweet,
So very soft and beautiful and meek,
Can crush beneath her feet
As I crush men who my life bravely seek.

I taught her all she knows
 Of our barbaric—and yet glorious—art ;
 And, then—Oh, blow of blows !—
 I taught her how to break my Roman heart !

I've killed, to-day, three men,
 Who were my comrades true of yesterday ;
 And she looked on, and then—
 Without a smile, she coldly turns away !

She wore me for a day
 Within the sacred precincts of her soul ;
 Then tossed my soul away—
 And now ten thousand leagues between us roll !

Hail, Cæsar, hail ! Send on
 The mightiest gladiator of the band !
 He's weaker than the one
 Who holds my crushed heart in her velvet hand !

I WISH I WERE.

I wish I were the soft lace upon my ladye's breast ;
 I'd be content if fortune sent
 Me there to be caressed
 By the beating of the rosy heart that in her bosom glows.
 Oh, I'd rather be the lace there than the reddest fragrant
 rose !

I'd rather be the warm heart beneath that snowy lace ;
 For then I could (be sure I would !)
 Send blushes to her face.
 And then my lot would happy be ; for, every time I'd beat,
 I would think and sing : Without me, her sweet life were
 incomplete.

But, then, to be the white soul behind my ladye's eyes !
 Ah ! joy divine would then be mine !
 I'd float through Paradise !
 And lovely dreams and rosy would before my sweet arise—
 If I could bud and blossom just behind my ladye's eyes !

TO-NIGHT.

Good-by, my dear—
No, not good-by !
But why, my dear ?
Nay ! tell me—why ?

Because, you know,
My letter, dear,
Said, "Good-night's so
Much better," dear.

UNDER THE GUILLOTINE.

Good-by, Antoinette !
The day is swiftly dying :
With it dies the heart
So true to you and song.
I see the green fields yet
Where love, my love, came flying,
To knit with subtle art
Our lives, when days were long.

Good-by, Antoinette !
My singing days are over :
No more of you I'll sing
In silent, tender strains.
But songs as sweet, my pet,
As asphodel and clover
From poets' souls will spring
To you, while song remains.

Good-by, Antoinette !
Love made you bend your regal
Head, till it touched mine,
One golden summer day.
Love made you pride forget ;
And so the lark and eagle
To heights in worlds divine
Together flew away.

Good-by, Antoinette !
 The knife is falling—falling,
 On wrinkled neck and fair—
 On blackened soul and white ;
 While I, on this charette,
 Can hear you calling—calling,
 And see your eyes and hair
 Through France's blackest night !

Good-by, Antoinette !
 Good-by, my tender, loyal,
 Sweet and loving heart—
 Good-by, my life—my queen !
 I feel your kisses yet—
 I see you bend your royal
 Head—and hot tears start—
 To wet the guillotine !

WHY SHOULD I SORROWING SIT?

Why should I sorrowing sit ?
 And why, like lost winds, should I moan ?
 Why should old grizzled Time flit
 Into the awful unknown,
 And I down here, weeping, alone ?

Why should I not race with Time,
 And be the first in at the goal ?
 Why not the end with this rhyme—
 And, at the end, your pure soul ?
 Then nothing between us would roll.

If you are living, above,
 With tears in your beautiful eyes,
 And soul o'erflowing with love—
 Why should my soul not arise—
 Out—up—through the infinite skies ?

If you are waiting, I'll come ;
 And if you are weeping, I'll fly.
 Love, just a kiss—and I'm dumb—
 Just let me hear a soft sigh :
 I'll know that you live, and I'll die.

AN ANSWER.

The silver boat in the golden sea,
Without sail, without oar, is floating along.

Ah, would it could go
To where she breathes low,
And bear to my treasure this song !

If I am farther away from thee
Than the earth from the moon, or the night from light,
I see thy sweet face
As it floats through space,
As thou seest my soul to-night.

Come near and bend thy glorious head,
Till thy hurrying breath is mingled with mine,
And, wraith as thou art,
Creep into my heart :
There glow like Falernian wine !

O boat, sail on thro' the golden sea,
Till thou touchest the shore where dwelleth my love—
Where the one supreme
Now lies in a dream,
'Neath the wandering waves above !

And, winds ! Oh, waft this song to the boat,
And the boat to-night to the star of the South !
Oh, and then waft this
('Tis a lover's kiss !)
To her beautiful, warm, curved mouth !

And whisper into her small, pink ear
That the kisses had wings of mystical light—
That up from the South,
From her perfect mouth,
To my lips they have flown to-night.

THE CONQUEROR.

Before the first man breathed, Time reared his head ;
Not till Death dies will Time himself be dead.

FOR A WOMAN.

"I tell thee, Lord Raven Howard,
That thou art an arrant coward!"

"And if I should say, 'Thou liest'?"
"Say thou that, sir, and thou diest!"

"Pooh! only hear the bantam crow!"
"Say, wilt thou fight me? Yes or no!"

"Fight *thee*! Ho! ho! thou puny knave!
Fight flies in summer when they rave!"

"Fight thee? For what? For yonder jade,
Who is not mother, wife, nor maid;"

"Who is not honest, good, nor sweet—
Who's crushed men's hearts beneath her feet,

"From wantonness—mere wantonness—
Who lives to blight, and not to bless?"

"Fight twenty million asses, sir!
Thou'lt fight not me, this day—for her!"

"There! take my hand upon thy cheek!
Now! Wilt thou fight for that, sir? Speak!"

"Ay, that will I—ay, that will I!
Now, look thy last on sea and sky!"

"For, if I reach that bold crag first,
Thou leap'st into the sea; or, cursed

"Be me and thee, and all I own,
If I am last, I'll leap—alone!"

And then, like stags, they shot away,
Pass the grim castle, old and gray,

Where, in a casement, sat the jade
Who was not mother, wife, nor maid—

Sat there, and stroked her falcon's head,
As her two lovers onward sped

Toward the crag o'er waters wide. * * *
They reach the summit, side by side !

She sees them stop and pant ; and, then—
Lord Howard seizes Drancylen

Around the waist, and leaps far out,
With one long, loud, defiant shout !

And then, the lady (" jade," *he* said)—
Turned, and stroked her falcon's head.

JOHNNY.

Johnny's hair is just like silk,
Johnny's eyes are brown ;
Johnny's skin is just like milk,
Johnny's lip hangs down.
Johnny in the corner stands,
Johnny bites his thumb ;
Johnny doubles up his hands—
Johnny's glum.

Johnny's looks are very black,
Johnny's blood is hot ;
Johnny waves his breakfast back.
Johnny eat ? Guess not !
Johnny's heart goes pit-a-pat,
Johnny's nurse is sad ;
Johnny does not care for that—
Johnny's mad.

Johnny's only three years old—
Johnny's rather young !
Johnny showed to-day, I'm told,
Johnny's little tongue.
Johnny cries (don't Johnny blame !—
Johnny's human, quite) :
Johnny's brand-new sister came
Here last night.

MARILLA.

A song is growing in my heart, Marilla,—
Now it's creeping to a chamber in my brain.
Oh, hear it from my lips depart, Marilla !
'Twill recall the olden, golden days again,
When we dreamed beneath the silver boat, Marilla,
In Seville—'neath the blue waves overhead,
And sent our golden ships afloat, Marilla.
But two in all the world know what we said.

Oh, I've lived a thousand years since then, Marilla !
Ah, how ! my lonely pillow only knows.
By day I've laughed and fought with men, Marilla,
While at night my heart grew gray with buried woes.
Then, while I wept, from out the gloom, Marilla,
I'd seem to feel your warm palm touch my cheek,
And your gracious presence in the room, Marilla,
Would send my grief some other heart to seek.

And, while I slept, you came to me, Marilla,
With warm love in your eyes of violet.
But when I woke, my ships at sea, Marilla,
Love-freighted tossed—and ah ! my eyes were wet.
But, once, with breaking heart, I slept, Marilla,
When something touched my mouth like Seville wine.
I awoke—and held you. Then I wept, Marilla,
And life with love I found to be divine !

We will walk again the olden ways, Marilla ;
You will coo into my ear the golden words
Which, in Seville, in the olden days, Marilla,
Charmed to your dainty feet the timid birds.
For God is good. The world is wide, Marilla,
But now I feel your hand, the world is small ;
For my world is where you abide, Marilla—
And I am yours through everything and all !

LIFE AND DEATH.

What we call Life—who knows?—with bated breath,
The passed away may whisper : " That is Death."

BROTHER BAPTISTA.

Brother Baptista was quiet and sad :
He dreamed by day and he dreamed by night ;
 And every day
 He was heard to say :
Let me dream and sing, and I'll climb the height.
 And the Friars would groan, Too bad !

For days he would brood ; then his eyes would dance,
His slight form quiver, his cheeks grow red.
 No prayers that day
 Would Baptista say !
And the good old Padre would shake his head,
 And look at the Friars askance.

Brother Baptista was gentle and good :
The Friars all loved and pitied him.
 But, up in his cell,
 He would dream, and—well
He would sing at night till his eyes grew dim,
 And he dreamed by day in the wood.

He loved the wood—and he worshiped the birds,
And the wild winds that raced through the trees.
 The brown bees would hum,
 And the birds would come
All around his head and about his knees,
 While he sang, in sweet, silent words.

Well, he dreamed and sang till his hair grew white,
Till his heart was as gray as his hair.
 Only yesterday
 He was heard to say :
I will climb the height ! The Friars declare :
 Brother Baptista died that night.

FRIENDSHIP.

“ I would go up to the gates of hell with a friend,
 Through thick and thin ! ”
The other said, as he bit off a concha's end :
 “ I would go in. ”

COQUETTE.

You are the prettiest girl in the world, my dear,
 With your creamy cheeks and your lustrous eyes,
 And your sweet, curved mouth, and your small, pink ear,
 And your artless look of surprise.

You are the daintiest girl in the world, my dear,
 From your kidded foot to your Grecian head ;
 Your smile is as sweet, your laugh is as clear,
 As if I were living, not dead.

And your heart is as light, and empty, my dear,
 As the ring you yesterday flung aside.
 For him (poor fellow !) would I drop a tear,
 But I have not wept—since I died.

Though I'm here at your side as you walk Broadway,
 You know it not. Still, I love you—and yet,
 I wonder whose heart you will break to-day,
 And to-morrow, dainty coquette !

Ah ! and I wonder, too, as we hurry along,
 When the tears to *your* aching eyes will start.
 They are tearless now. Your power is strong.
 But—the man who will break your heart ?

WHEN I LEAVE LANDS OF SLEEP.

When I leave lands of sleep,
 I turn to thee ;
 Then do my proud ships leap
 Into the sea.
 I watch them ride away
 Upon the main,
 But nevermore come they
 To me again.
 And when the day is done,
 And I can see
 Them go down with the sun,
 I turn to thee.

When bleak winds through my soul
 Tear all apart,
 And passions shriek and roll
 From brain to heart ;
 When I would climb the height,
 And soar away
 To where there is no night—
 Where all is day—
 Ah ! then I sleep, and go
 To where, to me,
 Dreams come—and, then I know,
 I turn to thee !

While through the weary days
 And wasted years
 I live, and dreary ways
 I walk in tears—
 In tears which never reach
 My burning eyes—
 One ship rides toward the beach
 Of Paradise ;
 And as it nears the shore,
 In from the sea
 Where waves and bleak winds roar,
 I turn to thee !

IN MY OLD DAYS.

I'm an old man,
 And I live in this house by the sea ;
 And I think of the days when the warm blood ran,
 And a warm heart beat, in me.

I loved mankind,
 And all women too much to wed one ;
 But I was so young—such a fool—and as blind
 As an old bat in the sun !

In my young days,
 I loved everything that was old,
 And the midnight oil I would burn till the rays
 Of the new day upward rolled.

I sang wild songs—

And I dreamed such wild dreams in the night !
Why, the dreams that a madman dreams, when he longs
For his lost love—freedom—light !

In my old days—

Why, the world may wag on if it will !
I dream not, nor care for the world's hate or praise :
So, I am happy. But, still—

Happy I'm not !

For I am what I ought not to be :
A poor, loveless, old man—a nothing, God wot,
In this old house by the sea !

AT DAWN.

Dost thou long for me as I long for thee ?

I wonder as I lie here,
And look far down in the drowsy South,
And sigh for thy warm arms, breast, and mouth,
While the dawn creeps my way, dear.

Dear, I lie and dream—while I dream I seem
Just to float through space from here,
Over the fields and hills that divide,
Till I lie down at the soft, warm side
Of the sweetest woman, dear.

Over fields of wheat the breezes come, sweet,
Singing soft and low, but clear,
Of how they caressed thy mouth and eyes
As they came o'er fields from paradise,
With this tender message, dear :

“The way is as long as a poet's song,
When the song is sweet and clear ;
And though she's lost in the drowsy South
In a world of dreams, yet warm is her mouth,
And she's waiting for him.” *Dear.*

GENIUS.

We measure Genius by our narrow laws :
 We cannot touch the ocean's bed with straws.

*NIAGARA.**

Since the first dawn, thro' vague and unknown ways,
 Between the icy north and where I fall,
 From lands beyond the pole, from where brooks call,
 And sing responsive to the cold birds' lays,
 I glide, I leap, I bound, thro' nights and days ;
 I rush, I rave, I roar, and I appal—
 Ay! to the very heights of heaven's wall—
 The hosts that reverential glances raise.

And puny men who walk the earth ne'er dream
 Of the great force beneath my glassy face.
 And, so, from my brown bed up to the sod,
 I seem in all my majesty supreme
 Defying time and earth, and fate and space,
 To be the tumult of the tears of God!

*TO STEPHEN C. FOSTER.**

[IN MEMORIAM.]

Thy humble lute was simply strung—
 To chords of joy or happy tears;
 And yet, through all the coming years,
 Thy songs will be by mothers sung—
 And by the old, and by the young,
 To banish heartaches, sighs and fears,
 When grief in lonely hearts appears—
 While memory's bells are softly rung.

And yet, you sighed, and suffered so!
 Walking the streets while lacking bread,
 Unconscious that the world, to-day,
 Would ever care to see, or know,
 The man, for thirty years now dead,
 Who gave it faithful "Old Dog Tray."

* See note on following page.

*HEROES.**

None braver ever lived or ever died,
 Since Cæsar ruled with iron will old Rome—
 Since Charlemagne led thro' the Rhenish foam
 The Frankish legions in his armored pride;

Not since the Spartan mother from her side
 Sent her wild son out from her Grecian home,
 To fight—to die. Nay, even the bloody loam
 Of Sempach's field ne'er saw such valor tried,

As when the glorious Travis fought and fell—
 As when the lion Crockett, roaring, bled—
 As when the valiant Bowie's soul was free!
 Hail! mighty heroes, thou the world loves well—
 Hail! noble souls that live and are not dead—
 Hail! most magnificent, immortal Three!

FRANCIS S. SALTUS.

[Died June 25, 1889.]

A genius died last night, about whose brow
 Fame never twined the laurel and the rose.
 A master he of music, verse and prose,
 Who lived, laughed, loved, and suffered, to endow
 The world with buds and blossoms from the bough
 That sways within the garden where Thought grows
 When the gale of Inspiration madly blows
 The daisies of sweet Song before God's plow!

Ah! who can wear the laurel, now he's dead?
 Not one among the many whom he knew!
 Pluck not the leaf for any—leave it there;
 And Time will weave it for his wondrous head,
 And Fame may bear it up beyond the blue—
 To where he sits and laughs with Baudelaire!

* These three sonnets were written by the late Francis S. Saltus and the spinner of
 SONGS FROM AN ATTIC.

TO A LITTLE BOY.

Dear, thoughtful, gentle, little boy,
 I'd not thy boyish dreams destroy
 By word or act, for wealth or joy
 That's not been mine.
 To make thee glad and never sad,
 I'd joys resign !

I'd scatter roses, night and day,
 Beneath thy feet, along the way,
 Till thou sleep'st in thy bed of clay—
 If so I could !
 I'd bear thy load along the road,
 And thro' the wood,

And up the hill, and down again,
 And far across the lonely plain—
 By night, by day—in sun or rain,
 Just thee to save
 From fortune's frown. I'd put it down
 Beside thy grave.

I'd have thee play a manly part,
 I'd have thee wear a manly heart,
 And worship beauty, truth and art,
 Thy whole life long—
 And pity all that strive and fall
 Amid the throng.

No blinding tears should burn thine eyes,
 Nor thy heart harbor weary sighs—
 But fair the winds and bright the skies
 Would be—ah, me !
 If I could love as One above,
 Dear child, loves thee !

TO YOU.

Sweetest and best—
 God knows the rest.

LOVE'S TRIUMPH.

Dear love, I do remember how you came
Down through the vanished centuries to me.
That time within my heart upsprang a flame
That never yet was seen on land or sea—
Or where the lark soars, free.

Long had my soul been flying, sweet, thro' space,
Tossed by every wanton wind that blew,
Seeking your white soul and fragrant face,
And famishing for what it never knew—
A royal soul and true.

From pole to pole it roamed, from land to land—
When time began the walk which will not cease
Till all is still : and once your soft breath fanned
It, as it hovered o'er the isles of Greece—
The sunny isles of Peace.

Long centuries passed before I felt again
Your soul near mine, and then I tasted sweets
A hunchbacked king might sigh for, all in vain !
Will you forget that day in old Troy's streets—
While your heart warmly beats ?

Your lucent soul swam in the summer air—
And mine, for æons full of pains and fears,
Would fain have met yours, held it—flown from there—
To where we had forgotten barren years—
And longing sighs and tears.

But from the North there came a rush and roar,
That froze the glad smile on expectant lips—
And we were flying from that classic shore
As aimlessly as two deserted ships
When Sol his pennon dips.

We neared each other once again ; that time
Was when imperial Cæsar entered Rome
With lordly men that marched like lordly rhyme,
'Mid the shouts that went thro' heaven's vault to dome—
That welcomed Cæsar home !

Again we parted. Once again we came—
When twice a thousand years had come and flown—
So near each other you could hear the name
I breathed into your very soul, my own—
My queen, sans crown and throne !

So near each other, I could feel your kiss ;
So near, your wandering soul was merged in mine ;
So near, dear heart, I knew—I knew but this :
I felt love's tendrils round my heart entwine—
I knew life was divine !

I knew you by your luminous wide eyes—
I knew you by your amorous gold hair—
Your soft, cool hands—the passionate replies—
And, love, you were so radiantly fair
That sweeter grew the air !

The stars all ran together when your mouth
Touched mine, my sweet, my life ! Do you recall
The words they formed above us in the south ?
Love triumphs over time, worlds, space and all,
Ay, over Death's grim pall !

You are mine—Love has given you to me.
You are mine—till we both are cold and dumb,
And You'll be mine beyond the mystic sea
Through all the million centuries to come—
Till Time's gray heart is numb !

A THOUSAND SONGS.

A thousand songs are in my head,
A thousand in my heart;
Where will they be when I am dead,
And we are far apart?

I'll lean across the golden gate
In golden paradise;
And winds will waft them, soon or late,
To thee from summer skies.

FROM A MAN OF THE WORLD.

Oh, I know no more than I ought to know—
But, I know this :
She will never receive from me, I trow,
A husband's kiss.

How can a woman be loyal to man
When clasped by men,
With her breast and arms for partners to scan,
And clasp again ?

Good ? Oh, good enough for a partner she—
Not for a wife.
She is too fond of licensed clasps to be
Loyal for life.

Why, I want a woman loyal and chaste
To idolize !—
No : not one who will let men clasp her waist,
With vicious eyes.

She can place her dainty foot on my neck,
If her soul's pure ;
I'm her slave thro' life, to death—at her beck
To war—endure !

To weep and smile with her—ay, and to dream,
With her, her dreams :
But her soul must be clear as a stream
In dreamland seems.

Refined and innocent, modest and meek,
She cannot be—
For her partner's gross and morally weak,
And—look there—see !

And she doesn't blush ! A moralist I ?
No : just a man,
Who's known when the wind was due east since my
Manhood began.

LOVE IS DEAD.

Too late ! the bells are ringing,
 Too late ! the stars are singing,
 Too late ! the winds are winging
 Beneath, around, above ;
 Too late ! for clasps and kisses,
 Too late ! for stolen blisses,
 Too late ! the phantom hisses—
 For cold and dead lies love.

Too late—for love was ours,
 Too late—have gone the hours
 When fragrant passion flowers
 Once blossomed in our souls ;
 And naught is left but ashes,
 Our hearts are ragged gashes,
 Through which the warm blood splashes,
 And into one soul rolls.

Nay, there is no to-morrow,
 No world that knows not sorrow,
 No hope from which to borrow
 A promise of that bliss
 We knew when days were longer
 Than nights, and love was stronger
 Than pride, which makes man wrong her
 He'd die to hold and kiss !

Too late ! there's no retreating—
 We must go forward, meeting,
 With bleeding hearts, just beating,
 The good or ill that's there.
 But how the night wind's wailing !
 While two ships sailing, sailing
 Apart, heed no voice hailing—
 And death is in the air !

MADNESS.

We call him mad ; we think he has no brain ;
 Deep in his heart he thinks we are insane.

TRYING DOORS.

I see a long and gloomy corridor,
And cold and very rocky is its pave ;
On the sides is many a fastened door—
At its head, a crib ; at the end, a grave.

I see a baby leave the cradle, and
Crawl to the first closed door upon the right.
INDIFFERENCE is written there ; no hand
Assists the babe ; it weeps there thro' the night.

The years roll by. The babe a boy is grown.
He softly tries a door upon the left,
But CRUELTY is carved there, and a moan
Comes from his heart, by sorrow almost cleft.

On roll the years. The man pines for the sun—
On every door he taps, but all in vain ;
For NARROWNESS and HATE the legends run
Upon the doors—and yet he knocks again.

But PREJUDICE and JEALOUSY look down
Upon him only at the end of years.
He wants Dame Fortune's smile, and not her frown ;
He wants to laugh and sing, and not shed tears.

At last he saw a door on which, in gold,
Was writ ACHIEVEMENT—and his work was done :
His shoulder to it, far away it rolled—
He stood and breathed the sweet air in the sun !

HIS PARTNER.—KANSAS, 1875.

He lies there, cold and dead, under the sun.
He was guilty of most crimes—weak, erring—but a brother!
Guiltless of no crime ? Ay, guiltless of one:
He never told a man of what he did for another!

PRUE.

Prue !

The winds—and birds sang, too.
 They saw you thro' the village highway pass,
 And press your pretty nose upon the glass,
 To see if in the pigeonhole for you
 Reposed a *letter*,
 Prue !

Prue !

They sang your secret to
 All those who cared to listen to their song.
 You were not dreaming as you passed along
 The forest aisle, of some one's eyes of blue?
 O ! I know *better*,
 Prue !

Prue !

Beneath the pines you grew
 (When you took the letter from your bodice, and,
 With sparkling, hazel eyes and trembling hand,
 Broke the seal) just as scarlet as the hue
 Of poppies—*I know*,
 Prue !

Prue !

O ! my, if you but knew !
 The wood-bards saw the sweet words that you read—
 Ay, saw you bend your pretty, golden head,
 And press your rosy lips upon the two
 Kisses from your—*Oh !*
 Prue !

A JINGLE OF TO-DAY.

“ Everything Repaired.” That on a sign
 A bankrupt, in all but wit, once read.
 He sauntered into the shop; in fine:
 “ Repair my fortunes, you dog!” he said.

A GOTHAM LADY.

Dainty hands and feet,
Dressed in glossy kid ;
Curved, ripe lips, and sweet,
Where strained honey's hid.
Slender form and tall,
Features finely cut ;
Eyelashes that fall
Over eyes of nut
Brown ; and oval face
That a poet sees
When he floats through space—
Dreaming—where the bees
Thro' the meadows race.
Ah, my lady, ah !
These are what I see
Through wreaths from my cigar
That float up lazily.

Spotless soul ; and heart,
Where the warm blood runs
Like the streams that dart
Under tropic suns.
Sunbeams in your hair,
On your breast a rose ;
Ribbons here and there
Stirred by breeze that blows
From the drowsy South—
And I see two rows
Of pearls in your mouth.
Round your perfect head
Silken hair and brown
I see coiled, instead
Of a jeweled crown :
And, oh, my lady, I
Scarce breathe as I draw nigh !

THE WANTON.

An angel acts behind her lids its part,
But, Oh, the cruel devil in her heart !

HOW CAN I LEAVE YOU?

How can I leave you
 When your tears flow?
 Why should I grieve you?
 Why should I go?
 Why should we lonely
 Drift far apart,
 When we two only
 Own but one heart?

Words idly spoken
 We should forget.
 Should hearts be broken
 When eyes are wet?
 Only we two know
 What we two said;
 I know and you know
 That pride is dead.

Wide is the world, love,
 But love is strong!
 My heart is furled, love,
 Up in this song;
 To you I fling it,
 (Ah! hear it beat);
 Soft winds will wing it,
 Sweet, to your feet.

THE SPINNING WHEEL'S SONG.

Oh, the Hudson is wide,
 And the mountain is high,
 Alice, sweet Alice Lorraine;
 And you'll not be his bride
 While the moon in the sky
 Throws a light over the plain;
 And he'll ride not, nor climb not, to kiss your sweet mouth,
 For he's fighting with Marion down in the South,
 And he'll never come to you again!

Oh, and what did you dream
As you slumbered so light,
 Alice, poor Alice Lorraine!
Oh, and why did you scream
In the hush of last night,
 Like a robbed eagle in pain?
Oh, you saw your love fall in the lonely morass,
And red Tarleton's red riders with naked swords pass,
 Leaving him with the dying and slain!

Oh, and why are your tears
Falling down on the flax,
 Alice, dear Alice Lorraine?
You'll forget him in years
When the sharp rifle-cracks
 Cease in field, valley and lane;
When our Washington comes at the head of his men,
You will choose a brave lad for a sweetheart, and then
 The old love, like the old moon, will wane!

Oh, he's riding this way
With a wild beating heart,
 Alice, my Alice Lorraine!
Oh, he's coming to-day,
And you'll never more part—
 Here he will ever remain!
For the war is all over, and Washington won,
And our Marion's men had the devil's own fun,
 In the land where a king doesn't reign!

TO ANSON POND AND LEANDER RICHARDSON.

When Captain Death shall touch you with his staff,
You'll greet him with a wild, Homeric laugh!
I'm sure that he and Sleep, his cherished wife,
Will say: "You buccaneers, go back to Life!
We thought our house was large, till you two came—
But it's pretty small at this stage of the game!
Come, down the road towards Life you two meander,
And live forever, Anson and Leander!"

THOU'LT NEVER KNOW.

Thou'lt never know—my lips are dumb—
 How much I love thee, love, to-night.
 Here, in the dying embers' light,
 Methinks I hear thee whisper, "Come!"
 The perfume of thy breath I feel—
 Thy gracious presence haunts this room :
 Two velvet lips seem now to steal
 Across my own from out the gloom.

Perhaps in some far realm thou'lt wait
 For me, who loved thee long ago,
 Just as, beneath Night's Queen's pale glow,
 Thou waited for me at the gate.
 Ah ! if thou only knew how I
 Have longed to slumber by thy side,
 The winds would waft to me a sigh—
 From thee to me—my dear, dead bride.

TO HENRY E. DIXEY.

You dear, goodhearted, wholesome, royal friend !
 To you I'd sing through heaven's choicest street :
 Because your nature is as fresh and sweet
 As ever Will of Avon's was. You wend
 Your way through lanes in souls that have no end ;
 Through lanes where blessings bud, in frost or heat—
 Through lanes where verbal morning-glories beat,
 And written snowdrops at your coming bend !

The flowers of the world to him belong
 Who picks them in the lanes of soul and heart,
 And bathes them with his laughter and his tears.
 The door to this old world's old heart is strong—
 But you have split it, by your magic art :
 Now, gather flowers through the wrinkled years !

TO A LITTLE TOT.

Be very good, and sweet, and wise,
 And you'll roll hoop in paradise.

VIRTUE'S ITS OWN REWARD.

Who's there? A clergyman! Pray, come in.
There's one chair somewhere—find it and take it.
I am bedridden, you see. Begin—
And, as you go on, take care you don't break it.

It's rickety—but, it is all I've got :
The rest of the furniture went for bread.
For five years poverty's been my lot—
But what will it matter when I am dead?

Oh, yes, I'll listen. Go on—go slow.
I'll listen to one who comes from the Lord.
And you are well-meaning and good, I know. * * *
Yes, Virtue, in truth, is its own reward!

You've had your say; now listen to me!
I am a woman in love with Death;
So, it isn't likely I'd lie, you see,
Between a gasp and a dying breath.

I was an actress, in love with Life—
Pretty, talented, young, heart-free;
I knew no man who could call me wife,
For I was then wedded to Art. Ah, me!

Many came wooing, and went away:
But one remained. He was rich and bold.
Well, there came a night of a certain day—
You may save your pity; my story's not "old"!

I was alone in the world, he knew;
Not a soul had I to resent a wrong;
And his wealth, he knew, would pilot him through
The rapids of vice like an angel's song.

It was after the play, one night, out West:
I was half ready for prayers and bed.
Came a knock at my door—I was partly dressed. * * *
No bellboy there, but this man, instead!

He entered and spoke. What could I do?
I ordered him out. He refused to leave;
And there he sat till the dawn came through
The curtains of lace, and laughed in his sleeve.

When he left my room, with a jibe and sneer,
 My heart was as cold as the heart of the dead's ;
 And I had good cause to think and fear
 That my reputation was patches and shreds.

Why, even the callboy, when we met,
 Sickened my heart with his meaning smiles !
 And the whispers and nods come, even yet,
 To my dying soul through the years and miles !

It was six long years ago, my good friend.
 That man's a husband and father to-day ;
 And, rich and happy, he's nearing his end,
 While I am an outcast on Life's Highway.

Although I've had chances to live at ease,
 Held out by such as the one I "man" call—
 I'm pure as the night I was born, if you please,
 And as poor as the poorest, and dying—that's all.

You may come in the morning—you'll find me here.

* * * * *

They came in the morning, with him from the Lord—
 And the good man preached o'er the dead girl's bier,
 And his text was : "Virtue's its Own Reward."

A COMEDY.

The morrow was to be my wedding day.
 The night before the morrow I would be
 As independent as the wind, and free !
 And so to one wild house I made my way.
 In the rich room where I was led, no ray
 Of light, except from two eyes, could I see ;
 But two soft hands and arms enfolded me,
 And close against my own a warm breast lay.

I knew she was as lovely as the night,
 And modest as the mistress of the sky,
 When back of clouds she finds a hiding-place.
 At last I found a match and, by its light,
 Convinced myself that it was so, when I
 And my dear promised wife stood face to face.

STRAYED OR STOLEN.

Has any one seen a pair of eyes
 As blue as the sea 'neath Grecian skies,
 And sweet, red mouth, and teeth like pearl?
 Well, they belong to *my* little girl.
 She strayed away with a pretty pout,
 And I don't know what it's all about.
 I would give my life, were my life all bliss,
 To feel again on my cheek her kiss.

She strayed away on a summer morn,
 When only the ghost of a storm was born:
 And it was born in her eyes of blue.
 I don't know what in the world to do
 Without her smile and her soft caress,
 And her presence my days and life to bless.
 She was so fair, delicious and sweet,
 That my heart never knew 'twas beneath her feet.

Oh, she was so sweet—and she was so fair,
 With her lovely eyes and her soft, warm hair!
 And her dear little hands, that fluttered so,
 And in which the dimples would come and go,
 When she opened them wide, or shut them tight,
 When love or storms made her pink or white.
 There is only this: I must pray to Him
 To send her back in the twilight dim.

I'VE WOUNDED BEEN.

I've wounded been by poisoned arrows, sweet;
 I've been deceived by every friend I knew:
 The loved and trusted scattered 'neath my feet
 Flints and thorns, but still I've left me—you!

I suffered in an impure atmosphere,
 But from my soul the deadly drops you drew:
 I breathe now in an air more high and clear—
 I elevate my thoughts: I think of—you!

CHARACTERISTIC.

I dreamed I died last night, and journeyed to
The gate where Peter nodded in the sun.
He awoke, to see me standing, peering through
The pickets, at the world my friends had won.

"My dear Saint Peter, let me in!" I cried.
"Thou canst not enter here, thou child of sin!"
"Why not? My reckless friends are there!" He sighed:
"The Mother, through a side door, passed them in."

EASY STREET.

Let me show you the way to Easy Street,
In easy metre, and easier rhyme:
You must shake the dust of care from your feet,
In Do Nothing Lane, in brave youth's glad time;
Then run up the Alley of Discontent,
Where the weeds of Envy and Dry Rot grow,
And out to the fields, ere the day is spent,
Where the clover blossoms of Sweet Hope blow!

You must pick a blossom or two as you stroll,
To pin in your coat, just over your heart;
Then let fearless Ambition's sun through your soul
Shine, till it reddens your faltering heart!
You must then leap the Hedges of Want and Woe—
And, Oh, for the life of you, don't look back!
But, away, eyes blazing, as great winds go,
For the Bloodhound Memory's hard on your track.

Now, over the Valley of Broken Hearts
You must find your way, ere the day is done;
Then, grope through the Cave of Remorse, where darts,
In flickering shafts, the weary old Sun.
Then, down through the Meadows of Sin and Doubt,
And over the Rivers of Wooing and Sighs,
Till the Bank of Friendship re-echoes your shout,
As you reach to grasp it, ere daylight dies.

You must hug that Bank till it crumbles away,
 And forget it not as you journey on
 Through the City of Love, for wise men say
 That living is naught when friendship is gone.
 Through the City of Love you must wisely walk—
 Till you come to the Town of Glorious Gold :
 Through the heart of that Town you must bravely stalk,
 As dauntless as Richard the First was bold !

The place beyond is called Indolent Square,
 And Riotous Avenue's just ahead.
 Of both those bleak places you must beware—
 For they lead to the Gutters of Ruin and Dread.
 Now, turn this Sharp corner, and there you are !
 That's Velvet Boulevard, under your feet—
 And this is the beautiful, wonderful, far
 Famed corner of earth we call Easy Street !

These graveled walks ! and those houses of stone !
 These exquisite flowers ! That strange perfume !
 And each person lives in each House alone ?—
 But, Oh, my heart ! there is plenty of room
 For you and for me, and for every man
 Who thinks Life as bitter as it is sweet.
 It isn't the wealthy alone who can
 Sleep contented, in-doors, in Easy Street.

THE OLD QUESTION SETTLED.

Peter Perriwinkle was a parson, pure and proud,
 Who used to preach on Sunday, in the village church, quite
 loud.

Peggy Perriwinkle was as pretty and as prim
 As any girl, ten years of age, that ever sang a hymn.

Parson Perriwinkle, in his pulpit got, one day,
 And he just looked as if he meant to have it his own way !

He frowned and coughed, hem'd and haw'd, and looked at
 all and each,
 As if he meant to drive down to their boots what he would
 preach.

He pondered for a little space, ponderously, then—
 “Was the hen before the egg, or the egg before the hen?”

The congregation startled were, and all just gasped for
 breath!
 And every man, and child, and woman, grew as pale as
 death,

As he thundered forth, again, in tones of Silas Wegg,
 “Was the egg before the hen, or the hen before the egg?”

A cold chill and clammy through the congregation ran,
 Then this whisper through the church—“*Isn't* he a brainy
 man!”

Three times did the query from his eloquent tongue race,
 And the last time his awful eyes were fixed on Peggy's
 face!

So, she rose up, and said, “Pa, as sure as my name's Peg,
 The egg was in the hen, and the hen was in the egg!”

AH, IDLE HOPES!

Ah, idle hopes! Oh, empty dreams!
 Why did you lure me on
 Down spring-kissed lanes and sun-kissed streams,
 When youth from me had gone?
 Alas, I sadly count the cost—
 My story's briefly told:
 For everything I've loved and lost,
 I could have kept with gold.

Ah, hollow years! Oh, bitter sweet!
 Hope's beacon light once burned;
 I followed it—to meet defeat;
 My tide has never turned.
 I gathered buds, and nursed them long,
 And in the stars put trust—
 For only this: the gift of song.
 Naught blossoms in the dust.

LA BELLE MARIE.

My sweet Marie, do you remember
 That day of days, long years ago—
 That dying day in brown September,
 When you and I walked to and fro
 Beneath the almost leafless trees,
 And watched the sun reel down the west?
 Ah, how the wanton autumn breeze
 Toyed with your tresses on my breast!
 You listened as I told the story—
 The romance of my love and life;
 Of how I'd war for gold and glory,
 For you, my queen—my promised wife!
 And how for you I'd climb Fame's crested,
 Stony, thorny, wondrous hill;
 And how, in days gone by, I'd breasted
 Ragged, cruel waves—and still
 You listened, while I rambled on,
 And in the dusk you peered at me;
 The life was stormy that was gone—
 I thanked the gods for that, Marie!
 For, matched with bitter, by-gone years,
 That day of days was sweeter than
 Life is to the one who fears
 To join the silent caravan.

You gave me then your curved red lips—
 Your heart, your arms, your eyes were mine!
 I did not taste my joys in sips—
 But in one kiss, like golden wine!
 And then— and then—we said good-by,
 For two long years it was to be;
 And not a tear-drop dimmed your eye—
My eyes were wet, my dear Marie.

My own Marie, they said, when dying,
 You had not called me once by name.
 For this I cared not; they were lying.
 But, dead! the world was one great flame!
 To know that you, my life, my treasure,
 Should cease to live when Fame was ours!
 To think that Death should tread a measure
 Above your grave, 'mid Life's spring flowers!

Delirium seized my tortured brain ;
My famished heart grew sick and hard ;
Out in the wild, black night and rain
I wandered to the old churchyard.
I found your grave. Above your head,
I read, upon a cold, gray stone,
Your name. The sexton's shed
Was near your grave, where I was prone.
A score of bounds, and I was there ;
Another score, and I was back.
I clutched a spade. High in the air
The brown earth flew. I wrenched the black—
The silver-plated—board (that hid
Your white-rose face) apart—to see
That the face beneath the coffin-lid
Was not the face of my Marie !
For, streaming down from fleshless jaws,
I saw a mass of tawny hair—
And then I knew the brutal cause
Of their untruths ! So, then and there,
From that time to eternity,
I swore to fight, on land and sea,
To win again La Belle Marie !

The grim, gray convent's bell was hushed,
And all the world seemed clothed in white.
The wind seemed whispering as it rushed
Through branches overhead : " To-night ! "
Within the convent you reposed—
No, not reposed ; you were at prayer.
The meek Superior, as she dozed,
Ne'er supposed her child's heart anywhere
But there, inside the walls of gray.
For weary months I'd watched for you,
Till your sweet eyes met mine that day !
And you were loving, dear, and true,
When I was years and leagues away.
I then knew why you did not weep
When I'd bade you that last good-by :
The church your soul was given to keep,
And I was left to long and sigh.

I saw remorse in your great eyes ;
I saw the hunted, haunted look,

That day, beneath Canadian skies.
 The penciled note from me you took.
 I wondered, as I gently stroked
 My Locomotive's glossy hide,
 If you'd come out the gateway—cloaked—
 Courageous for a midnight ride?
 And while I mused, the gate swung back,
 And you were in my arms—and free!
 The Convent bell awoke! the pack
 Were on our track, my brave Marie!

How Locomotive onward flew!
 And he'd a double load that night.
 Behind us came the angry crew.
 The virgin snow was not more white
 Than your sweet face. Your throbbing heart
 Beat close to mine, and your wreathed lips
 Met mine as if they'd never part—
 I warmed them by the sweet old art!

A golden pathway lay before,
 Made by the mistress of the night.
 They'd given up the chase!—the shore
 Of our dear land lay just in sight!

Through all these years you've been my queen—
 And I your king? Thank God! Ah, me,
 How many years since then? Sixteen! * * *
 Kiss me good-night, * * * my sweet Marie!

HELL.

The staunchest friend I had went straight to hell
 The night he died.
 (No worse was he than others I knew well,
 Of creed and pride.)

The King of hell was on his blazing throne,
 When he went in;
 And "every inch a king" he was, I own,
 This king of sin.

"And may I ask you how you like this place?"
Thus, to my friend.
"Oh, worse than this have I met face to face,
Times without end!"

That seemed to plague the well-known gentleman
Of blazing eyes.
Hell's roof flew up, until my friend could scan
Sweet Paradise.

My friend gazed long and earnestly up Heaven's street.
The devil sneered:
"Now, do you think my realm so very sweet
As it appeared?"

And when my friend said, "Yes," the devil screamed:
"Look up again!"
My friend looked up, and could have sworn he dreamed
He was in pain!

For there was she he'd loved through all his years,
As she'd loved him.
"Well, she's up there—God bless her!" Happy tears
Made his eyes dim.

Then, when the devil saw him smile, he cried,
As hell's flames roar:
"Look up, I say! What! must I be defied?
"Look up, once more!"

Once more he sent his eyes through Heaven's gate.
The King said: "Well?"
He saw his love kiss him he'd known to hate:
And—"This is Hell!"

TO C. L. B. CROMMELIN.

One morning, Nature woke, refreshed, and said:
"How very light my heart—how clear my head!
The storm that made me very ill, last night,
Has left my breast, and I've recovered, quite.
My soul's so sunny, I must *something* do!"
And then she went to work, and turned out—you!

A LULLABY.

Baby's going to college,
To get a lot of knowledge,
When he grows:
And he knows it—
For he shows it,
When he crows!

Baby's going to quarrel,
And be moral and immoral,
Like the best:
And he'll aspire
To climb higher,
Like the rest.

Baby's going a-woeing,
And a-suing, and cooing,
Many times:
And he'll do all—
But he'll rue all—
Most in rhymes.

Baby's going to marry,
Baby's going to tarry,
Ere he quaffs
Love's so be it—
I can see it
When he laughs!

Baby's disappointments
Will be salved with bitter ointments,
And he'll groan:
Will he share them?
No; he'll bear them
All alone.

Baby will have his troubles,
But they'll go off, like bubbles,
If he's brave:
Still, they'll grieve him—
But they'll leave him
At his grave.

A THOUGHT.

I will not sneer at any sane man's thought,
 However trivial it may seem to be :
 For, in a province far beyond the sea,
 The germ of an Idea fate slowly wrought
 Within a poor man's brain, one night, and fought,
 Till of his soul it gained the mastery,
 And made him from his room and birthplace flee,
 To where Wrong flourished, and where Right was naught.

That man's forgot—but to his Thought's no end !
 And Carlyle's shade is seeking his, to say
 (If it has risen from his bed of beds):
 My dear clodhopper, pepper-caster Friend,
 You made Imperial France what 'tis to-day—
 By chopping off more than a million heads !

TO PRISCILLA ON MY WALL.

I *know* it's Sunday there in Plymouth town—
 But why so prim, Priscilla, *and* severe?
All skies are gray at *this* time of the year—
 But that's no reason *pretty* girls should frown !

Miles Standish is an over-modest *clown*,
 Or he'd be by your side ; and *John*, I fear,
 Has not yet *spoken* ? He *will* speak, my dear—
Perhaps, ere you lay that prayer-book down !

But what I started out to say, was this :
 I've watched you many years, there in the snow,
 While finishing my castles in the air,
 And wondered if you've known a lover's kiss?
 But *this* is what I'd *really* like to know :
 Have you *been* to church, or are you *going* there?

TO HARSEN PRALL BENJAMIN.

Thank God for all the friends I ever knew ;
 And double thanks to Him for sending you.

COLONEL FLANAGAN'S ORATION.

[Over the body of Marshall Jim, Kansas, 1875.]

From many a town around we came,
 To hear him
 Speak of the life and death, fame and name,
 Of dear Jim.
 Out there, amid the grass and the birds,
 And pine stumps,
 Above the dead, he said just these words:
 "*He* was TRUMPS."

No climbing after flowers of speech,
 With which to
 Show the many his knowledge and reach.
 'Twas rich to
 Just notice each eye among us grow,
 With tears, bright,
 As the next words came, convincing—slow:
 "*He* was WHITE."

It was all tender, and very sweet.
 From his heart
 It sprang, like the grass beneath our feet—
 By no art.
 And then the touching end came; and so—
 End of Jim,
 When the Colonel said: "Say, there ain't no
 Flies on HIM."

BETWEEN ACTS.

Dear little fluttering hands,
 Sweet little sensitive mouth—
 Heart as warm as the sands
 Of a desert during a drouth.

Laugh as rippling and sweet
 As a brook or nightingale's lay;
 Such eyes! such hair! and such feet
 To dance the glad hours away!

Hair!—a rich golden brown—
 Eyes!—liquid sapphires, to me—
 Teeth!—kings might barter a crown
 For such pearls from a tropical sea!

That was your mother, my dear,
 Twenty-five summers ago.
 She was my sweetheart a year—
 "Will I wait and see papa?" Well, no!

THE GREAT PROCESSION.

Look up the street, look down the street—you cannot see it
 pass,
 And it glides along as noiselessly as breath upon a glass;
 No fife, no drum, no bugle-call is heard upon the air
 To tell the listening mortal that a billion souls are there.

At every breath a mortal draws a new recruit falls in—
 No bloody war they're marching to, to perish or to win;
 There are no Captains in the line—they're equal, one and all,
 When they join the Great Procession at the Great Command-
 er's call.

The King and peasant march along, the princess and the lass—
 The old graybeard and beardless boy—as all who live must
 pass.
 Caste and birth forgotten are in that noiseless tide—
 And a Cræsus marches humbly with a beggar by his side.

Oh! I have listened for it, but I've never heard it pass—
 For it glides along as noiselessly as sunbeams over grass;
 But though I never yet have heard, nor seen, it passing—why,
 There's a something in my heart that says, softly: "By-and-
 bye."

UNDER A PHOTO.

Here's a friend won't trouble you—he's dumb,
 So, pray,
 Please make room for him, for he has come
 To stay.

JAY GOULD.

This is the man whom I have known ten years :
 Two mild brown eyes, set in a sad, dark face ;
 A beard of black silk threads, that twine and trace
 An oval from chin-point to thin, keen ears.
 A voice as low and soft as banished Lear's ;
 A small and nervous hand ; a form to place
 Within a stripling's clothes ; from crown to base,
 A gentle man you see when he appears.

A man who hates and loves with all his heart ;
 A spirit born to lead and master men ;
 A giver whom to know is to respect :
 Loyal, kind and brave, he lives apart
 From meannesses of smaller folk—and, then,
 He's a true aristocrat of intellect !

WHAT'S THE USE IN CHASING FORTUNE?

What's the use in chasing fortune ? Fortune never dies.
 Have your grief, but never grievance. Waste no time in
 sighs.
 Everything will come to you. The world will better be—
 For rivers only run one way, and ever toward the sea !

Overhead the stars are living—always—day and night.
 The sun into some weary soul is ever flooding light.
 Make your soul your mirror : walk with Meekness, Wisdom,
 Pride.
 A wise man's pillow tells him more than all the world beside !

Love your neighbor as yourself, but not your neighbor's wife.
 The sweetest thing to living man or dying man is life.
 Love, ambition, hunger, wake the world when it would nod—
 And holy aspirations must soar up at last to God !

TO OTIS SKINNER.

What a soul is yours to glow and to aspire,
 Romeo ! if you were one inch higher !

TO TWILIGHT EYES.

Long centuries ago they saw her pass,
 Clad in a spotless robe from throat to feet,
 Down Alexandria's widest, splendid street,
 As sinless as a daisy in the grass.
 The rabble saw what she saw in her glass :
 A lovely face ; and eyes, wherein her sweet,
 Sad soul looked daily out from its retreat,
 And seemed to murmur for its house, " Alas ! "

Her fame they would have stained by word and nod ;
 Her soul they would have fouled with their minds' mud,
 And, failing this, Hate tolled her sweet life's knell.
 But you live in another age, thank God !
 And your soul and its house defy the flood
 Which swept Hypatia on to heaven from hell !

PRESCIENCE.

My friend and I walked down a foreign street,
 In far-off days, when, round a corner, came
 Another friend of mine, unknown to fame,
 And to my famed companion. It was meet
 That I should introduce my friends. Complete
 Was my surprise when, ere each I could name,
 My famed companion's eyes shot spokes of flame,
 As he ignored the hand that his would greet.

He trembled, paled, could not articulate,
 Before the man that he had never known,
 As if that man had tried to blast his life.
 Since then, he once saw him he knew to hate—
 Down there—last night—in that dark street—alone—
 They cannot speak, nor can my friend's dead wife.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Above the stars his soul is singing now :
 Not even Homer dares, or cares, to nod,
 As he sings on, with calm and cliff-like brow,
 Immortal in th' Academy of God !

SWINGING WITH THE TIDE.

MORNING.

It is morning in the world : our hearts leap up,
For what may come before the noon of night !
The stars may hold to our lips Fortune's cup,
And we may walk from darkness into light.
Dear God, we thank thee for the boon of day ;
Return our love, and lead us up the way !

NOON.

So many roads run o'er the mangled earth—
And we must choose before the day is done.
Such brave desires within our souls have birth—
And must they die and vanish with the sun ?
Ah, no ! Oh, tell us which road we must take,
Before night comes—before our poor hearts break !

TWILIGHT.

To-morrow—yes, to-morrow—they will come :
Fame, Love and Pleasure, in a splendid group !
From the horn of Plenty we'll take every crumb,
As up the road to Happiness we troop !
We'll bless our sorrows, when away they roll—
For Adversity's the builder of the soul.

STARLIGHT.

There are so many jewels in the sky,
That, surely, God meant one for you and me.
One pure white star might lead us, from on high,
Out through the dim morasses to the sea.
Into and through our souls the stars might glow,
Then, unafraid, we'd see, and trust, and go.

MOONLIGHT.

The moon sails through the melancholy skies.
The stars have disappeared. The restless wind
Is racing through the world, with sighs and cries—
And, now the moon is gone, the world is blind !
Where are the roads that lay before our feet
When morning dawned, and our hearts bravely beat ?

MIDNIGHT.

We are groping, groping, groping in the dark.
 Is that a light we see, far up the road—
 Or just a wall? The storm is growing. Hark !
 There's someone calling ! There, put down the load.
 The day was short—the stars were stern—all's past.
 We may walk from darkness into light—at last !

WHENEVER A BEAUTIFUL BLONDE I SEE.

Whenever a beautiful blonde I see,
 I think of thee.
 Whenever night's jewels glow in the skies,
 I see thine eyes.
 And whenever I see a field of corn,
 At early morn,
 Swayed by the breezes here and there—
 Thy hair ! thy hair !

When modest zephyrs the leaves caress—
 Why, that's thy dress !
 When mothers are crooning low lullabies,
 I hear thy sighs.
 When the night birds warble, *rejoice ! rejoice !*—
 Ah, dear, thy voice.
 When a warm red rose is bursting apart—
 Thy heart ! thy heart !

When I see two flowers from storied lands,
 I see thy hands.
 When the nude new moon floats out of the West,
 I see thy breast.
 When a ripe red orange breaks in the South,
 I see thy mouth ;
 And when the waves from an organ roll—
 Ah, then, thy soul !

TO THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

In your poems, sweet, deep words and thoughts are found—
 So, mind not the frothings of one drunken hound.

EVERYTHING CHANGES.

Everything changes in time ;
Everything passes away :
The birds to a sunnier clime,
When keen winds the last flowers slay.
Sweet love, and warm friendship, and youth,
The women, the children, and men,
Are gone while we're dreaming, forsooth,
To never come back here again.

The sweet smiles, caresses, and tears,
All must pass, as day into night.
The days, and the months, and the years,
Ambitions and envies, take flight.
The actor, the soldier, the king,
The beggar, the artist, the play,
The music that made the world sing—
Everything passes away.

Everything passes away,
In time, like the mind of a fool :
Like ripples that for a time play
When a stone's thrown into a pool.
Everything passes, as youth ;
Everything changes, in time—
But changes not beautiful Truth,
Nor the poet's beautiful rhyme !

IF.

If I could have
What I've just missed,
You might have all
The sun hath kissed.

If I could keep
What I've just spanned,
You might have all
The wind hath fanned.

EVER OF THEE.

Ever of thee, love, ever of thee,
By day and by night, on land or at sea ;
In sunshine and storm, through laughter and tears,
Through bitter and sweet, to the end of the years.
Thy wrong, in the world's eyes, in mine shall be right ;
Though stoned in the mart, thy soul shall be white
In my eyes, and cleansed in love's boundless sea—
Through life, love, and after, ever of thee !

Ever of thee, friend, ever of thee,
Till the king of assassins takes my soul from me ;
Thy cross up the mountain I'll help thee to bear ;
Thy sorrows and tempests I'll loyally share—
To the foot of the scaffold—wherever thou art,
Through the gates of inferno—to the core of its heart—
Thy hates, loves and wrongs, shall be mine till they flee :
O'er the rim of the universe, ever of thee !

TO A PICTURE.

To-day the world is glad,
And the river's dancing,
Like the gold-brown eyes
 In your dear, dreamless head :
So why should I be sad,
Or dreamily romancing,
When you are by, and skies
 Serene above us spread ?

Because I'm growing old—
Because my life is dreary—
Because hot, bitter tears
 Have my heart scarified :
Because the world is cold—
Because of life I'm weary—
Because 'tis many years
 Since you, my mother, died.

REVOLUTION.

A lighthouse was reared where the shimmering sea
Went peacefully wandering on and on ;
It towered aloft, when the sea was free
From strife, as the breast a babe rests upon.

And the sea took no heed of the mighty tower
That looked on its face that Summer day—
Till the lighthouse keeper laughed : "Thou art in my
power,
O Sea !" as the workmen went away.

And the days went by, till the Summer had fled,
And Autumn had followed in Summer's wake.
When Winter's winds blew, the lightkeeper said :
"Thy food, O Sea, from thy jaws I'll take !"

And year after year when the sea ran high,
The lightkeeper lolled in luxurious ease ;
For the beacon light lit the sea and sky,
And the sea could not its hunger appease.

And the ships rode on toward the harbor's mouth,
And the lightkeeper laughed, and the sea he cursed ;
Then, from East to West, and from North to South,
And from pole to pole, the storm-clouds burst :

And the sea arose, and an awful wave
Engulfed the lighthouse—and then it fell
Into the depths of the ravenous grave—
And the sea howled on like a fiend from hell !

KING ROBERT.

He loved Charity—and he
Loved weak Humanity,
And Pity ever nestled in his heart.
He hated Hypocrisy
As princes Democracy—
O, tell us, Robert Browning, where thou art ?

ACROSS THE YEARS.

Across the years we go to her—
My tender heart, why sigh?
And all we had to show to her
Was loving hand and eye.
No houses, lands, were ours to give—
No jewels, honors, when
We thought it bliss to sing and live—
My heart, we loved her then!

Now, down the years she comes to us,
And we've not younger grown;
But you are red and generous,
As if no years had flown.
She took the path around the hill—
We tried to reach its brow;
And we've been ten years parted, still—
My heart, we love her now!

BEAUTIFUL CHIMES.

From away up there
Through the frosty air
Warm rivers of melody float;
And I feel them roll
O'er my dreamy soul
From the airiest source remote;
And I also feel
Other rivers steal
From my famishing heart to eyes;
And the eyes grow dim
As the sad, sweet hymn
Is born to the infinite skies.

I'm a boy to-day,
And with boys I play,
While under the melody's charm;
And now I recline
'Neath a singing pine,
Overlooking the dear old farm.
Now the olden lays
Of the golden days,

That were sung on a Sabbath morn,
Ripple through my brain,
And I hear again
The zephyr-sweet, whispering corn.

It is milking time—
For the cow bells chime,
And the cattle are coming in.
It's Saturday night,
And the kitchen's bright,
And I for the boys must begin
"One of that Holmeses
Rippin' ole pomeses!"
So I read them "The One-Hoss Shay;"
And methinks I hear
The laugh and the cheer,
As I finish :—"Hooray! Hooray!"

Now I ride the waves,
Over nameless graves,
And I list to the waters croon,
As the sailors' song
Is wafted along
The vast sea, 'neath the amber moon :
And the moon rides high
In the midnight sky,
While the albatross is asleep,
Just a league ahead,
On the liquid bed
Of the mighty Pacific's deep.

O, beautiful chimes !
The old golden times
Come to me in your sad refrain.
The clerical pen
I take up again,
And the phantoms pass from my brain.
With a last look back
O'er the thorny track,
That no eyes but my eyes can see,
The past and to-day
Have drifted away
With your beautiful melody !

DEAD AT THIRTY.

Just for the sake of being called a good fellow,
 Just for the praise of the sycophant crowd,
 That smoked your cigars, quaffed your rich wines and mellow,
 You are sleeping, to-day, 'neath the sod in your shroud !

Just for the sake of being called clever—dashing—
 By human hogs living outside of a pen,
 The rain on your cold bed is ceaselessly splashing,
 While you should be living—a man among men !

Just for the sake of being pointed at—looked at—
 By the false, insincere, hypocritical crew,
 That grows on the follies of weak brains—like yours—fat,
 You are as dead as the dreams your boyish soul knew !

You feigned a contempt for the eagles of yellow,
 And scattered them broadcast, with boisterous mirth—
Just for the sake of being called a good fellow !—
 You are nothing, to-day, but a boxful of earth.

A LEAF FROM LIFE.

My friend was frank, as are my best of rhymes.
 We sat within a tavern, over wine.
 My purse, heart, sword, were his, and his were mine.
 Our souls together rang like Christmas chimes.

We both deemed treachery the worst of crimes—
 Until he blurted, 'twixt a leer and whine,
 That his friend's wife, whom his friend thought divine,
 Had been caressed by him a thousand times.

You should have heard him laugh in ribald glee,
 Wine-blind, not heeding how my soul he'd shocked !
 Then muttering, "The fool ! but such is life,"
 He left my side. For hers ? Well, as for me,
 I reached his door, as oft before, and knocked
 My way into the chamber of his wife.

SOMEBODY.

Somebody's coming into the world ;
Somebody's leaving it, somebody weeps ;
Somebody's barque on Life's stream is hurled,
Somebody gayly glides over the deeps.
Somebody, somewhere, is laughing to-night ;
Somebody's singing, while somebody sighs.
Somebody, somewhere, is quaffing the bright
Fruit of the grape—while somebody dies.

Somebody's parting from somebody sweet ;
Somebody brushes the tear-drops away ;
Somebody's dying, to-night, in the street—
Somebody made a great fortune to-day.
Somebody wonders, " Will somebody come ? "
Somebody ponders, " Will somebody wait ? "
Somebody's grief has made somebody dumb—
And somebody cometh too late !

Somebody's heart is bursting with joy ;
Somebody's starving, somewhere, alone ;
Somebody's praying for somebody's boy—
Somebody suffers and maketh no moan.
Somebody's hand is lifted on high ;
Somebody's heart is riven in twain ;
Somebody, somewhere, hears somebody cry—
And the river flows smoothly again.

Somebody's dirge is sung by the waves ;
Somebody nevermore sorrow will know ;
Somebody Dame Fortune's fickleness braves—
Somebody's soul's as pure as the snow.
Somebody's heart's as black as the night ;
Somebody's eyes are closed—'neath the sod ;
Somebody's soul was too weak for the fight,
And so it soared upward—to God !

TO SIDNEY FORDHAM.

You do so many things well ;—I do think,
You do but one thing ill, and that is—drink.

PACK AND PEDDLER.

I know a peddler, with a pack
Of dreams, and oaths, and lies, and fears ;
Of loves, of hates, of sighs, of tears ;
Of honors, hopes, joys, griefs. Alack !

He bears it up, he bears it down ;
Indoors and out, he shows his wares.
He sometimes meets me with a frown,
Or smile, or sigh. The pack he bears !

He fain would throw it to the dogs,
When he lies down to sleep—but, lo !
If he but dreams, he' onward jogs,
Still with his pack of weal or woe.

Sometime, the pack will from him roll,
And he will sleep a dreamless sleep :
A child into the world will creep,
To bear the self-same pack—the SOUL.

DESPAIR.

I lie in a quiet room,
In the autumn's evening gloom,
And a nameless, faint perfume,
Like a dying rose's breath,
Floats through the heavy air ;
And she sits so dumbly there,
With her soul steeped in despair—
For she thinks that this is death.

Two days and nights ago,
My life-blood ceased to flow ;
I breathed no more ; and so,
They thought that I was dead ;
But I note each tear and sigh,
And I hear the lost winds cry,
As they wander seaward, by
The gables, overhead.

Ah ! if I could but spur
My frozen heart—or stir
A hand—or call to her,
I'd kiss away her tears.
Oh, bend above me, sweet ;
My icy blood will heat—
My numb heart then will beat
For thee through many years.

My blood will run as thine
In thy rosy limbs—like wine ;
As thy heart throbs, will mine,
With thy lips to these pressed.
Across the room to me
She comes, at last—to free
My heart from slavery—
She weeps upon my breast.

She moans as moans the wind
When lost ; as moan the blind
When loved ones are unkind—
She's sobbing like the rain.
She cries as Mary cried
When Christ the gentle died,
As she knelt down beside
The body of her slain.

At length, upon my breast
The head I've oft caressed
Hath found a little rest :
Her sobs are hushed. Above,
The day is breaking—and
I move not lid nor hand ;
But God may understand—
My love ! my love ! my love !

THE OLD JOKE.

All who live must die, you know,
And loving hearts must sever ;
But, like the Jew of Eugene Sue,
It travels on forever.

OSCEOLA.

Where eternal summer reigneth, in the land of palms and flowers ;

Where the tiger lily longeth to receive the dews and showers;

Where the poppies, fanned by zephyrs, nod among the tassled corn,

Bronzed Apollo, Osceola, chief of Seminoles, was born.

None like him has lived and flourished since he died, and none so brave ;

And for fifty years the grasses have been growing on his grave.

Let me sketch him in his glory, for my listener and reader :

He was born to be a counselor, a warrior and leader.

From the three black ostrich feathers in his head-dress, to his feet

He was Nature's and his people's king, and just a Man complete

There would be as great a general as e'er heard thousands shout,

Had West Point, as well as Nature, turned this red Adonis out !

Why, you've heard, of course, the story? No, you haven't?

Well, then listen—

And it ought to make the heart and eyes of you to glow and glisten !

Uncle Sam, you see, not satisfied with what he had, one day

Set out to rob the Seminoles, in a gentlemanly way ;

So he sent a West Point captain, with a corporal or two,

To the lovely land of flowers' just to see what he could do.

Well, the captain had a headache—or a heartache—and went running

Back to Washington, as if our friend, the devil, were out gunning

In the cool shades of the everglades ; and Hickory Jackson toots :

“ Well, I'll send a man to Florida whose heart ain't in his boots ! ”

So he sent a gallant major, curled and oiled, to oust the “ reds,”

And in six weeks after that the major swore by feather beds !

And then he sent a general—a brave son of Mars and slaughter—

One who hated Osceola and the “reds” as he did—water.

And then he sent another—and he succeeded (like the rest)

In making Osceola move from his rich lands to the West—
From his meadows, hills and valleys, from his streams,
savannas, parks,

That were his before the Spanish leopards floated o’er St.
Marks!

And he did it in this manner, beneath the ramparts of Fort
King,

With the fine old tribe of red men sitting—standing—in a
ring:

Twenty chiefs had signed the “treaty” (they were bought
with rum and gold),

And Chief Osceola watched them, and his fine eyes madly
rolled.

Then, when his turn came to sign it, up he strode—the ink-
horn spilt—

And he drove his Spanish dagger through the “treaty” to
the hilt!

“There’s my signature! I’ve signed it! Leave our land of
fruits and flowers?

Where our fathers’ fathers died? Where we’ve passed youth’s
golden hours?

Leave our Florida and summer, to live ’neath a wintry sky?
Beneath the palm we’ve lived and loved, and under it we’ll
die!

Take your ‘treaty’—take your rifles—take your faces—from
our sight!

If the white man’s God is our God, He’ll not turn our day to
night!”

How they captured Osceola—how he broke his prison bars—

How he traveled fast and silently beneath the summer stars—

How he once more joined his people—struck the traitors to
the heart—

Fought, and whipped, the great West Pointers—played his
brief and glorious part—

Played with General Scott, the nation’s pride, as boys play
with a toy—

Is a legend to be chanted by another bard of Troy!

Edward Powell—Osceola—Rising Sun ! be yours the Fame
Your cause was just and holy, and to us belongs the shame !

You fought for what we warred for, just a century ago—
To keep your land and liberty, and crush a grasping foe !
No loftier spirit ever flew from this brave land of ours
Than the dauntless bronzed Apollo's, from the lovely Land of
Flowers !

MOTHER LOVE.

A man was born—lived, loved—and died
A soldier in a foreign land ;
And one there was who pressed his hand
Ere he crossed to the other side.

His lot less hard she tried to make ;
She smoothed his pillow, bathed his brow.
He loved her. She had made a vow—
Renounced the world—for Christ's sweet sake.

But when the soldier's eyes grew dim,
She passionately breathed her love ;
And she'd renounce all things above—
The Church, her mission, all—for him.

Too late ! Love could not call him back.
She kissed his dead, pale lips and eyes ;
She followed him to paradise.
Thro' many a labyrinthine track

She wandered—wandered on—alone,
(For she had broken holy vows).
Her drooping spirits none would rouse—
She fainted at the great white throne.

And when she opened her moist eyes,
Brown eyes, as moist as hers, met hers ;
A voice as sweet as wind that stirs
Red autumn leaves 'neath midnight skies

Made sweetest music in her ears :
"You pitied, loved, a man on earth ;
He needed both. I gave him birth ;
He called me mother. Dry your tears."

AT THE BALL.

Too late, too late—you in the old world tarried,
Until I was weary waiting in the new.
I looked by day, and longed by night—my heavenly secret
carried
In my heart of hearts, which only beat for you.

Take care, take care—pray, dance with less emotion,
For the eyes of Mistress Grundy are apart ;
And my white-haired lord and master wouldn't relish, quite,
the notion
Of me dancing with my tender old sweetheart.

You know, you know a girl can't wait forever—
You must know the acme of a maiden's dream.
If I'd been one of Fortune's favorite, petted darlings, never
Would our twin souls drift apart upon Life's stream.

Be calm, be calm—the lovely waltz is ended,—
It was famous Master Strauss' masterpiece ;
And we from glorious paradise together have descended.
We must part forever ; let us part in peace.

He comes ! good by. You go abroad to-morrow ?
Ah, well !—what have I to give to you—but this,
My hand in friendly pressure ? My heart is filled with
sorrow—
Nay, press upon my hand your good-by kiss.

AN ANCIENT CHAIR IN A MODERN WINDOW.

Near London Town ; it's Monday noon,
Six scores of years ago—not later ;
And Peggy Woffington will soon
Have fastened on her other gaiter.
I see her through the glass, up there ;
The gaiter's on—and patch and powder
Are deftly laid. Ah ! she is fair,
And proud—no English lady's prouder !

And she's good-hearted as she's fair—
 But Mistress Woffington is coming !
 She beckons for her men and Chair.
 She enters. How my heart is drumming !
 The four stout lads clutch each a pole ;
 They lift the Chair ; she does not see me !
 Yet her I love with all my soul—
 Now, would you, reader, like to be me ?

I'll follow her ; I'll win her yet ;
 If love wont win her, then my purse'll.
 She's worthy of a coronet—
 And yet she's off to a rehearsal !
 She loves the stage as I love her—
 As misers love the pounds they're nesting—
 I'll stop the Chair—and I'll not stir
 Till—see ! her carriers are resting.

That's Doctor Johnson, I'll be bound !
 And with him Goldsmith, wise as witty ;
 And Boswell—thought he'd be around
 Where Doctor Sam was. What a pity
 That they should stop her just as I
 Was going to declare my passion !
 Ah ! here comes charming Kitty Cli—
 Without a Chair ! She's not in fashion.

And here come Adam Smith and Quin ;
 They bow to Peggy with a fine air—
 While she—the Angel !—sits within
 Her painted Chair with a divine air.
 While they on one side talk, I'll steal
 And speak to Peggy on the other ;
 I'll tell her of my love, she'll feel—
 How Sam and Smith curse one another !

“Sir,” roars great Sam to Smith, “you lie !
 Don't try to tell me how Hume left us !”
 “You,”—this and that—mad Smith lets fly,
 “Of English speech you have bereft us !”
 But while they rave, my head is through
 The window of the Chair. I'm trying,
 In mellow tones, sweet Peg to woo,
 While horrid epithets are flying.

Sweet Margaret ! my fortune's great—
 My heart and arms for you are yearning !
 I've watched a twelvemonth at your gate—
 For you the midnight oil I'm burning !
 I've followed you—don't frown—to here ;
 I've seen you act a hundred times, *love !*
 Don't act now ; say you love me, *dear*,
 And I'll weave you in all my rhymes, *love !*

I'll wear you in my throbbing heart—
 I'll worship you—be faithless never.
 There—Smith and Johnson, all, depart ;
 The savage crew !—I'll love forever !
 O, Peggy ! Peggy ! don't go ! stay—
 Alas ! I see her lackeys leering,
 And I am standing on Broadway—
 Into a Broadway-window peering.

MADONNA MIA.

I shall, shall I not, on this side of the grave,
 Hold you close to my heart in a loving embrace ?
 I shall, shall I not, feel the lips you once gave
 To me, brush my hair and my brow and my face ?

You will come, will you not, with love, not a wreck,
 In the sweet eyes I likened to stars long ago ?
 You will twine your white arms round my throat and my
 neck,
 With your eyes and your shoulders and bosom aglow ?

I shall, shall I not, feel your breath on my cheek—
 Feel your heart beat to mine in a rapturous thrill ?
 You will come, will you not, repentant and meek,
 When you're free as a swift-running mountainous rill ?

We will dream, will we not, the old dreams of the past,
 When daytime and night-time were one time to us ?
 And we'll say, will we not, when together at last :
 From this time, for all time, we'll be heart to heart, thus ?

WHERE'ER I LIE.

Where'er I lie, come not when I am dead,
 Dear unborn friend, to scatter words of praise
 Of what I did in irritable days
 And gracious nights. Leave all thy thoughts unsaid.

And fling no flower that blows above my head.
 Thy sighs I want not, either. Go thy ways,
 Far from the silent singer of sad lays—
 For naught can soothe or harm me in my bed.

Pass on into the grim, barbaric mart—
 Pass on to some dim garret, candle-lit—
 Pass on to country by-ways—stony streets,
 And find the man of soul and roomy heart,
 Who daily fights gray grief, and conquers it—
 To him thy flowers and thy verbal sweets.

THE ODALISQUE.

Fifty months have rolled around,
 And rolled away, since I, a maid,
 Lived and loved on English ground,
 And picnicked in a Kentish glade.
 It seems a thousand years ago—
 So wearily the hours pass—
 Since a voice, melodious and low,
 Breathed love to Farmer Hawthorne's lass.
 'Twas in a quiet forest aisle—
 His tender words !—I hear them yet !—
 He held me close, and all the while
 He told his love my eyes were wet.
 My heart was his, and his was mine ;
 His heart was warm, and brave and true,
 And sturdy as the lofty pine
 That by our little brown cot grew.
 He kissed me when we parted :
 "For a while, my lass, farewell :
 In a month I'll come, light-hearted,
 For my bride—the village belle."

The days, the days—the happy days,
They linger in my memory still ;
And, Oh ! the thousand little ways
In which I'll show my love for Will !
The sun came up, and went to sleep ;
The round, old moon began to wane ;
But one more night the stars will peep,
And, then—I'll see my love again !
The stars came out, and disappeared ;
The birds don't seem to sing as sweet ;
The flowers I all the springtime reared
Seem odorless—life's incomplete.
The brook, the brook—the babbling brook,
Is not so musical to-day ;
Nor can I read, nor can I look
The happy maid of yesterday.
But he came back—and peace and joy
From my poor heart forever fled ;
For there he lay, my handsome boy,
All white and still and cold and dead.

Not one kind look, not one kind word,
From any mother, wife or maid !
I pass— a sneering laugh is heard,
And children seem of me afraid.
Oh, he is dead ! he cannot hear
The awful gibes, the cruel taunts ;
And all the world seems sad and drear—
Ah, how the past the present haunts !
But blame us not, for I was fair
And weak—and he was weak and strong.
Oh, Charity ! Oh, tell me where
To find you in the thoughtless throng !
The fruit is put to poor, weak lips—
We eat the fruit—thus God's own fell ;
Our mental selves the kind world dips
Into an everlasting hell !
You cheat, you kill, you rob, you lie—
It's all forgotten in a day ;
Unwisely love—the world goes by—
You walk in tears your lonely way.

The Sultan's agents walk the streets,
The parks, the by-ways, up and down ;

And when a pretty girl one meets,
 Oh, black he paints old London town !
 And rich and glowing is the life
 He'll paint for maids who lend an ear ;
 He'll tell you that a Sultan's wife
 Is in paradise from year to year.
 Once, one told me the fairy tale,
 One night in one of London's parks :
 " My form is shrunk, my cheek is pale,
 Each hour the wolf at my door barks.
 Why should I not ? No friend—no home—
 Despised—cast out, and shunned by all—
 Night after night the streets I roam—
 The wine of life is turned to gall."
 And, so, I bade a long farewell
 To English garrets, streets and people ;
 But now to hear the chiming bell
 Ring from a certain English steeple—

I'd forfeit all—all !—I possess ;
 My life of soft, luxurious ease—
 The Sultan's smile—for one caress
 Of winds that sweep through Kentish trees !
 The Sultan frowned on me to-day—
 The eunuch grinned—I held my breath—
 My God ! my God ! I can but pray—
 His frown means banishment—or *death* !

* * * *

The sun poured down red, glowing, hot,
 One bright September morn—
 And upon a headless trunk that shot
 Swiftly down the Golden Horn.

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

Obit, August 10, 1890.

To reach this world, you broke your prison bars—
 Since then the years have numbered three times seven ;
 And now your soul has gone beyond the stars,
 To break into, but never out of, heaven !

LIFE.

Life is too short to quarrel ;
Life is too brief to sigh—
Too sweet to be always moral,
Too pleasant to daily decry ;
Too sunny to be always grieving,
Too precious to fling it away—
Too sad to laugh from the leaving
Of the crib to the bed in the clay.

Life is too strange for any
To fathom—to comprehend ;
Life is so gloomy that many
Hope and look for the end.
Life is too fleeting to worry,
Too solemn to joke by the way—
Too joyously dreamy to hurry
To-day into lost yesterday.

Life is so full of laughter,
Of joy, and sorrow, and tears—
Of meetings and partings, that, after
All, a play it appears :
Tragedy, comedy, pathos,
Entrances—exits, and strife :
Charity, sentiment, bathos,
Shifting scenes, quick curtain—Life.

I THINK OF THEE.

I think of thee when day is dying,
And shadows creep along the floor ;
When to the steeple birds are flying,
And north winds roar :
When, quite alone, I hear the quarter
Pealing from the church's tower,
I think of thee, Eve's sweetest daughter,
In that calm hour—
And all the past is o'er me stealing,
Like ripples o'er a summer sea ;
When down the west Old Sol is reeling,
I think of thee.

Oh, I can hear the lost winds sobbing
Thro' yonder trees, o'er ancient graves ;
And I can feel my heart's blood throbbing,
Like weary waves—
Which once leaped down a quiet hillside
To join a stream that sought the sea ;
They might have joined the sluggish mill-tide,
But, wearily,
They beat around a battered cruiser,
Cast up along a lonely shore ;
So my life, sweet, a weary loser—
And nothing more.

ONE POET'S EYES.

When twilight, as if loth to go, around our cottage lingers,
And the perfume of the warm moss-rose fills all the summer air—
Ah ! then I love to feel upon my eyes my darling's fingers,
And love, across my wearied face, to feel her silken hair.

I never saw my loyal girl, but yet her every feature
Is graven in my heart, by Love ; is living in my brain ;
And well I know without her I'd be but a helpless creature—
As helpless as a rudderless ship upon the Spanish Main.

With her eyes, I can see the feathered songsters and the
flowers ;
I can see the sun rise grandly over hill, and dale, and
brake ;
I can see the white-winged ships ride by, and whispering
summer showers,
As they rhythmically patter on the bosom of the lake.

With her eyes, I can see the mighty waves of the Atlantic,
Like a drove of snow-white chargers, madly break upon
the shore ;
I can see the cliffs of Cornwall, awful, gloomy and gigantic,
Standing as they've stood for ages—as they'll stand for-
evermore.

With her eyes, I can see the winding, ocean-seeking river,
And the moon rise o'er the tree-tops, and the diamond-
studded sky ;

I can see upon the lower branch the thrush's full throat quiver,
As his liquid notes float upward to the Highest of the High.

And when the day is dying, and the wandering wind starts
fancies,

As sad and low it rushes past, or down the chimney sweeps,
Her golden pen is busy writing out my poor romances,

As the bright flame from the pine-knots in the fire-place
madly leaps.

Ah, her life is all self-sacrifice, and tenderness, and—duty ;
Without her, life would be a blank, and with her—it's a
dream.

Without her, life would be devoid of peace, and love, and
beauty,

And aimlessly and hopelessly I'd drift adown life's stream.

Since the morning when she put her hand in mine before the
altar,

In the little village chapel, far away from London's strife—
'My dear Philip's eyes are full of tears—and his voice begins
to falter'—

She's been my patient, tender, loving, darling little wife.

"IN THE BEGINNING."

"In the beginning"—Stop there : pray,

Brother, do not end it—

Till you can conscientiously say :

"Yes, I comprehend it."

The very first line in the book !

I'll read it through and quote it,

When you can say with honest look :

"They understood who wrote it."

"In the beginning"—you ever will

Believe the book and love it—

And imagine a "beginning"—still,

The awful meaning of it !

JETSAM.

As in a dream, I see a sandy beach ;
Far out at sea a single sea-gull soaring ;
As in a dream, I hear the sea-bird's screech,
But high above the screech the mad waves roaring.

Upon the wind-swept beach I see a wreck,
Above the wreck a gull and black clouds flying ;
The wild winds toss brown tresses round the neck
Of that fair wreck upon the lone beach lying.

Her lids are locked ; her matchless limbs are cold ;
The wanton wind her lovely breast's revealing ;
Her heart will never beat again. Behold !
Night flings her black robe down—the thunder's pealing.

I see the ragged lightning split the sky :
The black waves dash again and roar around her,
Then clutch her in a mad embrace, and fly
To—where God's angels, let us hope, surround her.

FLOTSAM.

As in a dream, I see a moon-washed sea ;
Down in the West I see the Isle of Shoals.
The sea is flowing as relentlessly
As the King of Terrors marches after souls.

Boundless, pitiless—like the Dawn, it runs,
And sobs against the boat in which I sit ;
But gentle as a country stream, when suns
Of drowsy August sparkle over it.

As in a dream, I see the boat sail on :
And I am dreaming of a friend I knew,
Who won the maid—in days forever gone—
The maid I worshiped. Lo ! there in the blue,

Deep waters of the sea that kiss my boat
I see my false friend's shattered form and face ;
And while I sadly gaze there seem to float
Wrecked souls of friend and sweetheart into space !

MARGUERITE.

I will tell you what I know of Marguerite :
 Her eyes are bluer than a Monday morn ;
 Her hair is browner than a study, born
 Of knots that make the student's life complete.

As slim as my three fingers are her feet ;
 Her placid lips are never curled in scorn ;
 Her soul by passion's gales is never torn ;
 She's plump—not fat—embraceable—petite.

A tear is foreign to her tranquil eye ;
 Unselfishness and she have never met,
 And fame of her good deeds can never blab.
 She is a breathing, artful, dainty lie :
 Her face a living truth is, always—yet,
 Her heart is just a red and crawling crab.

AN ACTRESS SPEAKS.

And you are a spinner of rhymes, they say—
 And yet think me passionless, hard, severe ?
 Why, how can that be, when I bear away
 From fifty to sixty thousand a year ?
 If I were all that, could I eat and drink
 The richest food and the rarest of wine ?
 With beauty, alone, you know I would sink—
 Just like the other ninety and nine.

Well, yes, I have beauty—thank God for it !
 And I fill the eye, if I don't the heart.
 I know how to stand, how to walk and sit,
 And enter and exit in every part.
 I know what the Author meant I should know—
 But I keep my heart in my safe, warm breast ;
 The wine of the vine is there, and the glow
 Of the ardent sun in the tranquil West.

Shall I wear my heart for the covert sneer ?
 Shall I bare my soul for commercial eyes ?
 Shall I show my limbs for the *roué's* leer—
 His approval win with passionate sighs ?

Shall I kiss the "hero" with lips of fire,
Till his heart taps mine in a hot embrace,
To furnish the strings for a rhymer's lyre,
And win, for a day, a column of space?

No, never! while beauty and youth are mine—
Nor yet when they both are withered and dead.
I shall disappear; and shall make no sign
Of keen disappointment, deep grief, or dread.
You put the best in your heart in your songs?
You are a man, and have little to lose—
And little has woman; that little belongs
To her or the *café*—so, she must choose.

And I choose to walk on the clean, bright side,
Where the morning glories can touch my hair!
The pathway is pleasant, and long, and wide—
The wine of the morning is in the air.
The lees of the night are across the way—
And the crossing's muddy the best of times.
So, now, if you want this prosy bouquet,
Why, take it, to pick into thoughtful rhymes.

THE ANGELUS.

The soul of God seems floating down the air;
The forest minstrels hush their merry peals:
The good wife at the cradle softly kneels,
And in the fields men bow their heads in prayer.

The boys and girls stop dancing, here and there,
Among the honeysuckles; at their meals,
The rich and poor, alike, pause, as at steals,
Through cabin and chateau: their souls are bare.

The loved reverberation floats away,
Across the meadows, fields, and up the hill,
Then softly, sweetly, sadly, gently, dies;
And with it dies the glad or sorry day:
The sun drops down the West, and all is still,
As to his nest and mate a linnet flies.

TO ROBERT HILLIARD.

[On his first appearance as a professional actor, January 18, 1886.]

DEAR BOB : Two thousand days have come
And gone since first we met ;
Methinks I hear the wild bees hum
And rivers running yet,
As merrily as when they hummed
And ran, when you and I
Dreamed our dreams while Bob Whites' drummed
Beneath the Autumn sky.

We talked of all the mighty men
And women of the stage
Who've lived and died since Shakespeare's pen
Ran in the golden age :
When Burbage and the nameless rest
In the old *GLOBE* drew breath,
And in the taverns drank with zest
To good Elizabeth !

You raved of Garrick, Clive and Quin—
Of Kemble, Siddons, Kean ;
I swore the laurels you would win
Ere you were thrice thirteen.
You flung Will Shakespeare at my head
An hour by the sun ;
And this is what, Bob, Bob White said :
“ Bob White ! Bob quite ! Well done ! ”

We dreamed the afternoon away
(And after it the night),
Till interrupted by the gay
(And noisy, Bob) Bob White.
You gave him—sticks for bawling so—
And stones—you man of pelf,
More freely than you'd give, I know,
Away your precious self !

Ah ! Bob—I called you “ Bobby ” then,
For we were beardless boys ;
Razors keen have made us men,
And cut into our joys—

Our boyish ones. The by-gone time
 Comes up before my eyes,
 And inspiration for this rhyme
 I draw from wintry skies !

I fill a flagon up with wine
 Before I see the play,
 And drink success, O, friend of mine,
 To you in Verzenay.
 May you upon the stage where ran
 Your dreams in days so prized,
 Be actor, artist—gentleman,
 And see all realized !

I drain a flagon to the dregs,
 And wish you Joy and Fame :
 May they on long and nimble legs
 Come looking for your name !
 If on the stage you act your part,
 Until life's setting sun,
 With cool, clear brain, and good, stout heart,
Who shall not say : " Well done " ?

TO TIME.

Oh, tranquil Time, I mold a rhyme to thee !
 Thou goest where thou listest, night and day ;
 Thou tappest hearts and heads, and, lo ! they're gray ;
 Thou twistest joy to sorrow, gloom to glee ;
 And, as thou stridest to eternity,
 Illusions try to woo thee on the way ;
 Love to hate turneth ; hate to love ; and May
 Strayeth into bleak December's arms, and he,

With brawny force and brutal, bruiseth all
 The buds and blossoms in her yellow hair,
 Being dumb with vigor to her modest cries.
 Ah, Time ! oh, Time ! thou, too, shalt have a fall ;
 And, when thou fallest, thou shalt drop to where
 A world of space in lonely grandeur lies !

SWEETEST AND BEST.

Wind of the West ! Wind of the West !
Waft this soft kiss to the sweetest and best !
Over green meadows and under green trees,
Skimming the clover and kissing the seas,
Glide in where slumber the sweet-laden bees—
Then out, honey-laden, and back to the West,
And touch the curved lips of the sweetest and best !

Wind of the West ! Wind of the West !
Sing what I've sung to the sweetest and best !
Sing it in numbers as soft and as low
As the waves of a summer sea glide to and fro—
As a blind maiden's laughter and smiles come and go—
Sing it to her in her warm little nest,
Then she'll know that I know she's the sweetest and best.

A MAY-DAY SONG.

Heigh ho ! O let us go Maying,
And let us forget for to-day we are men.
Heigh ho ! O let us go straying
Away to the woods, and be youngsters again !

Heigh ho ! O come, be a rover,
And rove far away from life's tangles and snarls.
Heigh ho ! O follow me over
The bridge that runs over the wandering Charles !

Heigh ho ! a wreath for the maiden,
A cock'd paper hat for the dear little boy !
Heigh ho ! the May-day is laden
With promise of sunshine, and feasting, and joy !

Heigh ho ! the blue clouds are over,
The daisies are nodding just under our feet ;
Heigh ho ! the dew-spangled clover
Peeps out of earth's bosom the zephyrs to greet !

Heigh ho ! wood-poets are singing
 And swinging on green branches just overhead.
 Heigh ho ! the forest is ringing
 With songs of us youngsters, and robins new wed !

Heigh ho ! the Maypole's a wonder !
 You take a red ribbon and I'll take a blue.
 Heigh ho ! now over—now *under* !
 What a beautiful pole for the wood-bards to view !

Heigh ho ! now let us go home, for
 The Gypsies will catch us if we tarry here !
 Heigh ho ! ah, why did we roam ? for
 I see in the eye of my comrade a tear.

SEESAW.

Seesaw, seesaw,
 Ah ! what would we not give to play seesaw again—
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 With the loves of our youth in the meadow and lane ?
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 We can dream, only dream, of the days that are dead ;
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 When our hearts were as light as the skies overhead !

Seesaw, seesaw,
 Oh, how merrily onward the broad river ran !
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 You will soon be a woman, and I'll be a man !
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 We will marry when Christmas bells swing to and fro ;
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 When the echoes are whispering over the snow.

Seesaw, seesaw,
 The old dinner-horn sounds and the farm-hands are done ;
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 How their rough, honest faces are bronzed by the sun !
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 Now down toward the farm they are wending their way ;
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 There are two making love—there are ten making hay !

Seesaw, seesaw,
 The gay bobolink whistles just over our heads !
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 What an odor is blown from the strawberry beds !
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 I am up ! you are down ! Now, I'm down ! you are up !
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 When we're married, on berries and cream we will sup !

Seesaw, seesaw,
 Let us turn and look back, ere we lie down to sleep,
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 To the fields where the winds through the lush grasses creep.
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 We can never go back o'er the long, weary way ;
 Seesaw, seesaw,
 We can dream, only dream, of our youth's golden day.

TO BOYS.

Cherish the being who first felt your breath,
 Through all the years till you go down to death.
 Wear her forever in your heart of hearts
 Till soul from body silently departs.
 Make her path level ; strew love's blossoms there ;
 To her dear head add not one silver hair.
 Shield her frail form from all rude blasts that blow
 Across most souls of mortals here below.
 Let no harsh word to your lips ever come
 When things go wrong ; live in her presence dumb
 Rather than let one syllable depart
 To wound her fond and tender mother's heart.
 Make all her life one sunny afternoon,
 One Sabbath afternoon, in balmy June.
 Bring to her soft eyes not a single tear
 Till she stands childless o'er your narrow bier.
 And if you stand above her earthy bed,
 She'll see you through the blue clouds overhead,
 And smile, and think : " To me, since life began,
 You ever were—God's own—a gentleman."

'LIZA RILY.

She was only a pup when I fust picked her up
 In a street in this town in a storm ;
 Yet I mind that she cried, like the Nor'easter sighed,
 From my breast, w'ich were ragged—but warm.

I'd been over the world—had been battered an' swirled
 In the camps an' in ships, from a boy ;
 An' not one ever cared how my barque ever fared
 When 'twas tossed in a storm like a toy.

I had no one to love—all I loved were ABOVE—
 When I heard 'Liza's bark in the gale ;
 So I stooped, an' picked up the forsook little pup,
 An' for port with the outcast set sail.

'Twere a good while ago—ten or twelve year, or so—
 But we've loved, an' divided our hoard.
 She's been grateful as I, mate, will be, by-an'-by,
 If I am but took in by the Lord,

When I come to His gate, some wild night, purty late,
 A poor castout that nobody knows,
 Per'aps He'll take me up, mate,—as I did the pup,—
 May I ask, matey, what you surpose?

* * * * *

Now, say—*that* kinder cheers, mate, an' drives off the fears
 That I've had since the pup left my side.
 She *went out*—the same way we must all go some day—
 Say—she just licked my hand—then she died.

She were outcast—but *true* ; an' the Lord knows it, too :
 She deserves all UP THERE *we* may win.
 Now, if me an' the pup at His gate, mate, fetch up—
 Do you think, matey, He'll take us in ?

LOVE AND POETRY.

Love is a revelation ; is having, holding, losing, heaven, calm
 and a storm.
 Poetry is thought, inspiration, imagination, music, spirit and
 form.

WRITTEN ON PICTURES.

If I could speak to you, I'd say—
In anger? No! nor sorrow—
Here's a friend who's come to stay;
Here's a friend who's come to-day;
Here's a friend who likes your way—
One, who likes you better, may
Come to you to-morrow.

Just a corner in your heart,
Just another in your house:
All I ask are these, sweetheart—
I'll be quiet as a mouse.

WITH PIPE AND GLASS.

With pipe and glass the hours pass
Calmly by;
And, vision-proof, above the roof
Lost winds cry.

High and higher leaps the fire
In the grate—
As her soul flew, one night, up to
Heaven's gate.

So long ago, I scarcely know
Just how long.
I'm left to pass my nights with glass,
Pipe and song.

I sadly miss her good-night kiss.
Over there,
Where curtains stir, is standing her
Vacant chair.

I loved her so!—and this I know;
She loved me.
With all her heart? Why do I start,
Doubtfully?

I know she smiled—just like a child—
 While I wept.
 Another's name to her lips came
 Ere she slept.

Father's—mother's? Sister's—brother's?
 My heart's cold.
 She loved but me. Ah! now I see—
 I am old.

Yes, very old. The night grows cold—
 How years pass!
 You came to me with whole heart free—
 Eh, my lass?

I hear the rain against the pane
 Softly knock.
 Low and lower—slow and slower—
 Ticks the clock.

Ah! I was blind—but always kind—
 Eh, my love?
 How dark it seems—you'll come in dreams—
 From—above.

A SOLILOQUY.

I envied the wind that kissed your cheek;
 I envied the sun that bathed your hair;
 I was loyal and loving—but meek:
 You were haughty and cruel—but fair.

I was a wandering troubadour, when
 You won my singing heart and my mind.
 I was as mad as the maddest of men:
 You were no better, no worse, than your kind.

I am an actor, with glory and gold;
 You are a chorus-girl, lowly and meek.
 From my window I see you out there in the cold—
 Do I envy the wind that kisses her cheek!

SISTER FÉLICITÉ.

Sister Félicité's dead !
And Gardener Gaston is mad !

* * * *

In a little red house by the side of a mill
The Rose of the Valley was born.
We were playmates ; we romped over field, over hill,
And played hide-and-seek in the corn.
The same pedagogue taught us both to be wise—
To look out on the wide world with clear brains and eyes—
To bear and forbear ; to do and to dare ; our crosses to bear
With patience ; to wear the crown, if dropped down by the
King of the skies,
Thankfully, meekly—not with false pride nor weakly.
We grew side by side, and she knew, ere she died,
That the love of a strong man is stronger than pride.

Not a maid in the land half so dainty as she ;
Not two in the world were as happy as we.
I'd escort her to school, where we sat side by side,
And at night o'er the moonlighted river we'd glide.
And we'd stroll through the woods ; to the tree-tops I'd climb
For the young of the wood-poets ; never a time
Did I reach out to grasp from their warm little nests
The babes of the bards of the woods from the breasts
Of their mothers, but she would cry : " Dear Gaston, dear !
Let them be !"—in a voice that would melt in mine ear.
And if from the stream that ran by the mill
A fish I would pull, her brown eyes would fill,
And she'd plead for its life till, alas and alack !
I would to its own liquid world cast it back.

A thousand and one times I found her in tears,
All alone in the woods. Once, she told me her fears :
She knew she'd been born, and she knew she must die ;
She knew in a narrow cold bed she must lie.
She did not fear Death—though she knew Death would rive
Our souls—but she feared to be buried alive !
So did I fear the black fate that saddened my love—
But I was a falcon ! and she—was a dove :
And I'd never breathed what she'd told to me
Until her secret sprang from her heart of hearts—free.

Then I told her to weep not, and told her my fear,
And tenderly brushed from her long lash a tear :
And I promised to save her, and she, with a sigh,
Gave her word that if I should (" but God forbid ! ") die
Before He saw fit to call her on high—
As I'd do to her that she'd do to me,
Were the world standing by my black coffin to see !

In the month of June we married were—and I
Took her from the little house beside the mill ;
Her mother wept ; I heard her father sigh,
And down his cheek there coursed a tiny rill.
But I was happy with my live-long love,
And selfish—as most happy people are ;
And I scarcely heeded chimes that rang above
The honest lads' and lassies' glad " Hurrah ! "
As we homeward wended from the Church of Christ,
For I was happy with my love unpriced.

The months rolled on ; a year had passed away,
When a little stranger came to fill our cup
With joy ; but, ere the night had turned to day,
Christ, the King, had called the little stranger Up.

Another year had come and gone. One day
A royal party drove into our park—
Thinking our domain their King's highway.
They ate and drank and laughed till after dark.
The moon was up when my dear love and I
Strolled down the avenue beneath palm trees,
And came upon the royal party. High
Rang out their royal laughter ; then, when my
Little speech of welcome I had made,
We joined them in a moonlight masquerade.
We danced beneath the trees a minuet,
A handsome prince picked on a mandolin :
Methinks I see their graceful figures yet
Swaying to the lovely silvery din.
And then we walked about among the trees ;
My love was hanging on the prince's arm ;
I thought my jealous heart would crack or freeze—
I thought I heard the roaring of mad seas—
I thought ten thousand devils on the breeze
Were riding toward me to do me harm !

The fires of hell were blazing in mine eyes—
Volcanoes of the South were in my heart,
As I heard the honied words and burning sighs
That made my love with silent wonder start !

The royal party went away, at last ;
But in a week the royal party came
To "spend a month in shooting ;" in the vast
Country round about was royal game.
They took the old chateau a mile from ours ;
Then I was called one hundred leagues away—
Was gone a week—returned to where the hours
Of our wedded lives were passed. Thro' new-mown hay,
Across the fields and over stiles I leapt,
Impatient to just hold my love again.
So late it was I feared my treasure slept.
A fence I vaulted, and ran up a lane
That led to where I'd brought my queen to reign.

I saw them in the moonlight breast to breast !
I met the royal blackguard face to face !
I held his royal head between my hands !
I bent his royal back across my knee !
The good folks of the province know the rest—
He never wooed again with courtly grace—
He's gone to hunt for game in mystic lands,
For the royal blackguard robbed my soul from me !

For years that night came back to me in dreams—
In dreams I saw my lost love from me flee ;
In dreams I heard the prince's awful screams,
As I heard them when I crushed him o'er my knee.
For years I wandered, hunted, o'er the land,
Seeking for my false, but still loved, wife.
Oh, you who deeply love will understand
How pride will prostrate fall at love's command—
How love to certain souls is more than life !

I found her thus : Outside a convent wall
I lay in rags, unshaven and unshorn.
I slept, and in my sleep I heard her call,
As she used to, when we played among the corn.
It was early on a hot midsummer's morn :

I heard her call, and to her I would fly—
 I awoke—to see an abbess standing by.
 I could not speak, so weak was I ; and she
 Thought, good soul, that I was deaf and dumb.
 She motioned me to rise, and then to “come”
 Within the convent walls. I eagerly
 Ate what she procured, and cheerily
 Earned what I had eaten, where the hum
 Of wild bees drowned the grouse’s measured drum.
 So I became the convent’s Gardener ;
 But I had never ceased to think of *her*.

One morn, about a year ago, there came
 A gentle nun to watch me cut the grass ;
 I saw her coming—expected her to pass,
 As others had ; but, no, she spoke my name !
 My wife ! my brown-eyed, uncrowned queen !
 One panther spring, and she lay on my breast !
 Dear God, I thanked you ! * * * How she sobbed between
 The words, half-formed, her little tongue expressed !
 O, love returned ! O, happy, golden days !
 We hid our secret from the very sun ;
 And we’d escape ! I’d walk again love’s ways
 With this gentle, loving, sinless little nun.
 Ay, wronged she’d been. As spotless was my dove
 As any dame that ever walked the earth :
 The guilty passion of the prince gave birth
 To terror in the soft breast of my love.
 That night he’d seized her with an iron arm
 And rained hot kisses on her lips : her shame
 Had made her passive, and her dumb alarm—
 “And then”—“And then ?” “My Gaston, love, *you* came !”
 And then—she hid her sweet face on my breast,
 And her yielding form I closer to me pressed.

To-night it was we two were to have fled ;
 But she’s lying in the room above me—dead !

The lights are out ; the nuns are all asleep ;
 To her window and her bed I’ll climb and creep.
 Anon the moon will ride behind a cloud.
 Softly—so !—she is sleeping—in her shroud !
 What eyes she had !—so dewy, warm and brown ;
 But the curtains of my lady’s eyes are down.

Ah ! the window's up—slowly—softly—so :
 I must keep the promise given years ago.
 She dreaded so to be entombed alive !—
 One kiss, my saint ; this dagger then I'll drive
 Into this satin, marble breast, where I've
 Dreamed so oft. * * * One more, my pulseless nun, * * *
 Now * * ALIVE ! O CHRIST ! WHAT HAVE I DONE ?

* * * *

Sister Félicité's dead !
 And Gardener Gaston is mad !

MUSINGS.

Ah, my ladye was fair,
 And her warm, tender hair
 Was a soft, golden brown ;
 I inspiration drew
 From her twin lakes of blue
 When my muse seem'd to frown.

Her low voice was as sweet
 As a poem complete
 From a poet's fine hand ;
 And the twin rows of pearl
 'Neath the lips when they'd curl—
 Ah ! you can't understand.

The roses in her cheek
 Seemed to play hide-and-seek ;
 And the notes that would float
 Were as sweet as a chime
 Of bells at Easter time,
 As they welled from her throat.

I could see in her eyes
 Love, trust, and Paradise,
 With her face up to mine.
 But that was long ago—
 On her grave flowers grow,
 Under maple and pine.

TWILIGHT FANCIES.

I am sitting in the twilight, in a room in Gotham town,
While an equinoctial's howling down the street ;
And I seem to see a maiden, in a chip hat and a gown,
Picking buttercups and daisies at my feet.

She very gravely ties them, as she picks them, in a bunch,
With a piece of far-off Eastern cotton thread ;
Then I very gravely ask her if it isn't time for lunch,
And she very gravely shakes her pretty head.

The tall grass in the distance rolls in undulating waves ;
The feathered bards and bees sing roundelays ;
And the Santa Clara softly, as the wind o'er nameless graves,
Ripples, down the slope, of coming golden days.

I watch the dainty maiden thro' an afternoon in June,
And I romp with her thro' daisy-covered dells ;
Then I—Hark ! my old Italian clock is chiming out a tune,
And I swear I hear again the mission bells !

But—the maiden, picking buttercups and daisies at my feet ?
How the gale sings thro' yon telegraphic wires !
Making music as delicious as her voice—and low and sweet
As the chanting of the old Franciscan Friars.

WHEN LOST WINDS.

When lost winds whistle thro' the park,
Or chant sweet melodies ;
When honest Madge's honest bark
Is stiller than the breeze ;
When all above, and all below,
And all around, is still—
Oh, then, dear heart, let fancy go,
On airy wings, my love, until
Your eyes, my love, will overflow—
Till love your eyes will fill,
My love,
Till love your eyes will fill !

When, from your chamber window, you
 Look down the rocky glen—
 Or up above, beyond the blue,
 Where our two souls have been ;
 When, wafted on the soft night breeze,
 You hear the night-birds' song,
 Borne from the concert in the trees,
 Oh, then, dear heart, let fancy throng
 Your soul with by-gone melodies
 We sang when nights were long,
 My love,
 We sang when nights were long !

When lying in your downy nest,
 The old moon in your face ;
 Your twin lakes closed ; upon your breast
 Naught but the fleecy lace :
 Let sweetest dreams that ever came
 To your dear dreaming head
 Come to it then : and breathe my name :
 My soul will hover round your bed :
 Will see the shy, delicious flame
 Come to your cheek, till red,
 My love,
 Till your cheek's rosy red !

A PLAY.

Well, the play went on, and I sat it thro',
 And wept with the rest o'er the doomed queen's woes
 In her dungeon there, surrounded by foes,
 Where never the kiss of her child she knew.

And a lost soul glared thro' her great, grand eyes
 When the jailer chuckled : "Thy child is dead !
 "And thy lover, too !" then her reason fled,
 Let us hope, thro' the gates of Paradise.

Then he led her off thro' the dungeon door,
 To the headsman's axe in the outer court ;
 And a sigh went up, like a dull report,
 When the curtain rolled down to rise no more.

In a box on the right I heard her say—
 A queen was she from her boot to her hair :—
 “Why should I weep for that woman in there,
 “When lives are ruined—hearts broken—*to-day* ?”

And the worldly man with the cynic's smile,
 As he slowly rose from his cushioned seat :
 “There are coffins to-day in hearts that beat—
 “And corpses, too.” Then he passed up the aisle.

Outside she stood, till her carriage came :
 And I saw as he passed their wild eyes meet :
 And he groaned : “My God !” as he reached the street;
 And I heard her whisper the cynic's name.

XII. CENTURY SONG.

Golden brown my lady's eyes are,
 And her face is fair ;
 Rippling down to where her thighs are
 Gleams her golden hair—
 And her smile's as rare,
 For me, as her soft sighs are.
 Within the heart, within her breast
 Hate, not love, hath found a nest ;
 She loves a stripling in the West—
 She loves not me, though she confessed,
 Once, her heart was mine ; I guessed
 Not then what woman's lies are !

Oh, by my bearded face, she may
 Join her beardless swain !
 To Palestine I'm off—to slay
 Saracens again !
 Welcome, wind and rain !
 Vanish, night ! and welcome, day !
 She's mine to kiss, but not to make
 Love me just for Love's sweet sake.
 I'll have her not, though my heart break.
 The troubadour may my love take ;
 She'll tire of her singing rake—
 O, thou jade, thou !—go thy way !

PROSE.

She told it to me in a sweet, low tone,
 In the hospital ward to-day.
 We two were standing together alone,
 Near by where the sufferers lay.
 And a nameless thrill shot into my heart,
 From my heart to my brain it rose—
 When she said, 'twas worthy the poet's art,
 And should never be told in prose.

An orphan was he, about three years old,
 When they carried him senseless in ;
 With starry blue eyes and tresses of gold,
 And soft dimples in cheeks and chin.
 His poor little back was broken in two,
 And he moaned far into the night—
 Till he saw the nurse's eyes moist with dew,
 Then he said : "I'll be soon all right."

"Don't cry," said he, "for I'm going to sleep,
 And I guess I want to be kissed—
 But not on the mouth ! right *there*—to *keep*,"
 And he put up a tiny fist.
 So she kissed the fist, and he went to sleep,
 With the fist 'neath his dreaming head ;
 And they found it there, 'neath his golden hair,
 When the dear little fellow was dead.

WHEN I WENT UP TO LONDON.

When I went up to London town, the year was in the spring,
 And all the birds in English lanes had all their songs to sing;
 And all my heart was packed with love and laughter, love
 to win,

When I went up to London town, to dance with Nelly Gwyn !

When I went up to London town, from old Southampton's pier,
 The yeoman and the plowboy's song, rang true and loud
 and clear ;

But the song and singer of my heart I'd find in London's
 streets,

When I went up to London town, to meet dear Johnny Keats!

When I went up to London town, my heart was fixed upon
 The wit of Cibber, art of Garrick, smiles of Woffington ;
 And if I missed those matchless three, up there, I lived in hope,
 When I went up to London town, of meeting Steele and Pope!

When I went up to London town, Sam Johnson and his friends
 I knew I'd meet, and that we'd talk of mighty odds and ends ;
 And then, perhaps, we all would go down Fleet street, hand
 in hand,
 When I went up to London, to the Maypole in the Strand !

When I went up to London town, I'd look for Tyburn Tree,
 And Claude Duval and all his men I knew that I should see ;
 And Addison, and Byron, Moore, and then that witty man,
 When I went up to London town—Dick Brinsley Sheridan !

When I went up to London town, I knew they'd come around.
 When I went up to London town, I'll tell you what I found :
 No Nelly, Peggy, Garrick, Keats, to take me by the hand—
 No Cibber, Johnson, Maypole—ah ! I only found *the Strand* !

AFTER THE FIGHT.

Six of them sat in the wine-shop together :
 Their sabers were hung on the wine-shop's wall ;
 And twelve stout legs, all encased in leather,
 Were stretched 'neath the board, and over them all
 The firelight played ; and the wine went round,
 And Babette and Clarette and France were toasted ;
 And, " Here's to the health of him who's found
 Above ground to-morrow ! May our foes be roasted !
 Or in the mills of the gods be ground ! "

The youngest cried : " Let us fill our glasses,
 And drink to my faraway, lonely grisette ;
 And I'll drink to yours, ere old Time passes
 Another sweet night with my warm Annette.
 My sweet Annette ! how your blue orbs haunt me !
 How I envy old Time, and the winds that blow
 Into our room ! But nothing will daunt me
 Till I cool my face in your bosom of snow—
 Then the fiends below, if they will, may taunt me !

"Her eyes are like grapes by the sun's rays lighted—
From her brow to her small pink toes she's a woman ;
The shape of her arm would a monk have delighted,
And her heart is warm, and deliciously human !
She's to be my bride when the wars are over—
She's to be my wife and my guiding star ;
And, list ! nevermore will I be a rover
When my love is my wife. Annette Lamar,
Here's that our lives may be passed in clover !"

"Annette Lamar ?" gasped a grizzled old vet ;
"That is the name from my lips that fell."
"And when and how did you meet your grisette ?"
"At night ; on the brink of a moral hell."
"And where ?" "In Paris." "How old is she ?"
"Eighteen, if she lives till May blossoms fall."
"And her father and mother, who may they be ?"
"God knows !—not she—nor do I ! Is that all
You wish to know of Annette from me ?"

But the sneer was lost ; with an awful moan
The grizzled old veteran bowed his head,
And sat for a time as if carved in stone.
Then, after a little, he quietly said :
"Annette Lamar you must never wed.
Give me your word that you'll see her no more ;
You'd be wronging the living and wronging the dead.
I am her father. The mother that bore
Her—well, from this earth her soul has fled."

"Now, were you forty times over her sire,
By Joan of Arc, I'd marry her still !
Not a word, or your head goes into the fire !
You lying dog ! do you think to instil
Your venomous lies deep into my heart,
And rob me of all on earth I hold dear ?
Do you think by a mountebank's vulgar art
To make a stout soldier of fortune fear,
Or from the light of his life to part ?"

"You shall never wed her," was all that came
From the cold, white lips of the rugged old vet.
Then, "My child she is, and she bears my name,
And I'll seek and I'll find my lost Annette."

"But you'll find your grave," the other cried,
"In a minute's time, or I'll find mine ;
Far better men than you have died
For less than you've said"—and a goblet of wine
He dashed in the face of him who "lied."

The soldier of fortune and veteran stand
In the firelight's glow : "One—Two—Three—Fire !"
One shot is heard at the stern command,
And the noble old veteran's about to expire.
"The one that bore him gave her heart to me,"
The brave soul gasped, "but her hand to another :
I let her go ; we were poor, you see—
Her husband knew not how we'd loved, one the other—
How I loved that lad's and his sister's mother !"

I CAN AFFORD.

I can afford to let the world go by,
With all its envies, jealousies and strife ;
I can afford to dream without a sigh
Of what men think the good things of this life ;
For I before my fire when day adjourns
Can sit and stroke Hypatia's lovely hair ;
Or, I can roam with bonny Bobby Burns
Along the bonny banks of bonny Ayr !

I can afford to let the world go by
Without an evanescent thought of me ;
Its treacheries and hates I can defy,
With art's dear children gathered round my knee :
For when the shadows dance upon the wall,
My heart is swimming in a sea of light ;
When day is done, I hear the phantoms call
That lived two thousand years ago to-night !

I can afford to let the world go by—
As go it may unto the very end ;
No hates, no sorrows, no regrets have I,
With imagination as my constant friend :

With imagination and the muse I live—
And love—within my attic near the sky ;
So, why should I a wanton thought e'er give
To the sad old world that passes coldly by ?

LOVE.

Love is a sigh—
But who would stop sighing ?
Not I, not I—
Not if I were dying.

Love comes and goes—
How cometh ? where goeth ?
Nobody knows—
Ah ! Love alone knoweth.

THE LAST WALTZ.

The cold moon in the heavens hung low,
While the music, so soft and so sweet,
Went whispering over the snow,
To the patter of rhythmical feet.

I sat in an alcove alone—
I was dreaming of faraway days,
When the belle of the ball was my own,
To sing of, to love, and to praise.

It was summer time ; 'neath summer skies,
Every cloud in my sky ceased to roll,
As the glory and truth in her eyes
Swam out and swam into my soul !

She was mine for a year and a day,
To caress upon lips, eyes, and brow ;
And then my love melted away,
And left me alone, as I'm now.

She drifted away to the town,
As my sun melted down in the west. * * *
And to-morrow she marries a clown—
With that marvelous heart in her breast!

But—the clown is a ten millionaire.
So, indeed, I'll not blame her for that.
Why should she my few thousands share,
When her mine is thick-witted and fat?

What a dance she will lead him! Heigh-ho!
Why—she's looking—she's coming this way! * * *
Oh, I pray you be seated—don't go!
For the sake of the past, won't you stay?

Not a word from my lips shall you hear
Which will make you the favor repent;
And good-will at this time of the year
Should induce you—to-morrow is Lent.

That is right. Let me get you an ice?—
Well, a drink?—something cooling and sweet?
You're as lovely and wholesome and nice
As you were when I lay at your feet.

You are blushing. Why blush? The old heart
That you knew has gone out of my breast;
I live now in the interests of art,
Good-fellowship, wine and the rest.

Will you grant me a favor to-night?
'Tis the last; it will bury our faults. * * *
You are free till to-morrow's in sight.
Then we glided away in the waltz.

With her heart beating up against mine,
"Do you honestly blame me?" she said.
"Not by word written, spoken, or sign,
Will I show that I do"; then her head

Drooped low on my breast, as the strains
Of the orchestra died in my ears.
She was dead in my arms. Naught remains
Of that night except longings and tears.

HERE ARE ROSES.

Here are roses of passion from bushes of love,
 Which I lay at the palms of thy feet :
 For I see rainbowed skies in the depths of thine eyes,
 And in dreamland I hear thy heart beat !
 In the noontide of night, there's a thrush fast asleep
 In his nest in the realm of my heart ;
 But at morning he springs from his nest, dear, and sings—
 And of naught that can keep us apart !

To the orchards of fancy my singing thrush flies,
 Where the blossom of deathless love blows.
 He hath gathered the sweets ere the brown bee he meets,
 From the cells in the heart of the rose.
 Then he wings his way back in the twilight to me,
 With his sweets in his throat packed away—
 And his notes climb and chime with the glad summer time,
 When some day will be mine—and to-day !

DOES SHE EVER THINK OF ME?

Does she ever think of me,
 Over there in Italy ?
 Does she ever hear my heart
 Beat its prison bars apart ?
 Does she see it as it lies
 At her feet, beneath her eyes—
 Beneath the golden glory of her wide, sweet April eyes—
 Eyes that look like sun and star-light seen through rain in
 April skies !

Does she sing the songs I sing,
 In her praise, from spring to spring ?
 Can she ever—ever know
 All my longings and my woe ?
 I would dare and I would do,
 If I only—only knew ! —
 If I only knew she knew that all my nights and all my
 . days
 Were passed in dreams and thoughts of her whom winds and
 poets praise !

OH, BLUSHING FLOWERS.

Oh, blushing flowers of Dorchester,
Your perfume comes to me,
Through twenty years of smiles and tears,
As rivers seek the sea.
Your grateful fragrance comes my way,
By subtle memory led—
But dreams I knew, when I knew you
Are faded, withered, dead !

Oh, blushing flowers of Dorchester,
My blushing days have died,
And all my hopes down barren slopes
Have rolled to join the tide :
And every tide has borne along
What fate has torn apart—
And tides won't stop till every drop
Of blood has left my heart !

Oh, blushing flowers of Dorchester,
There may be some glad day,
Before I die, when I'll not sigh—
But God seems far away !
Yet stars seem far away at morn,
And still they're in the sky ;
So, I'll take heart of grace, and face
The coming by-and-by !

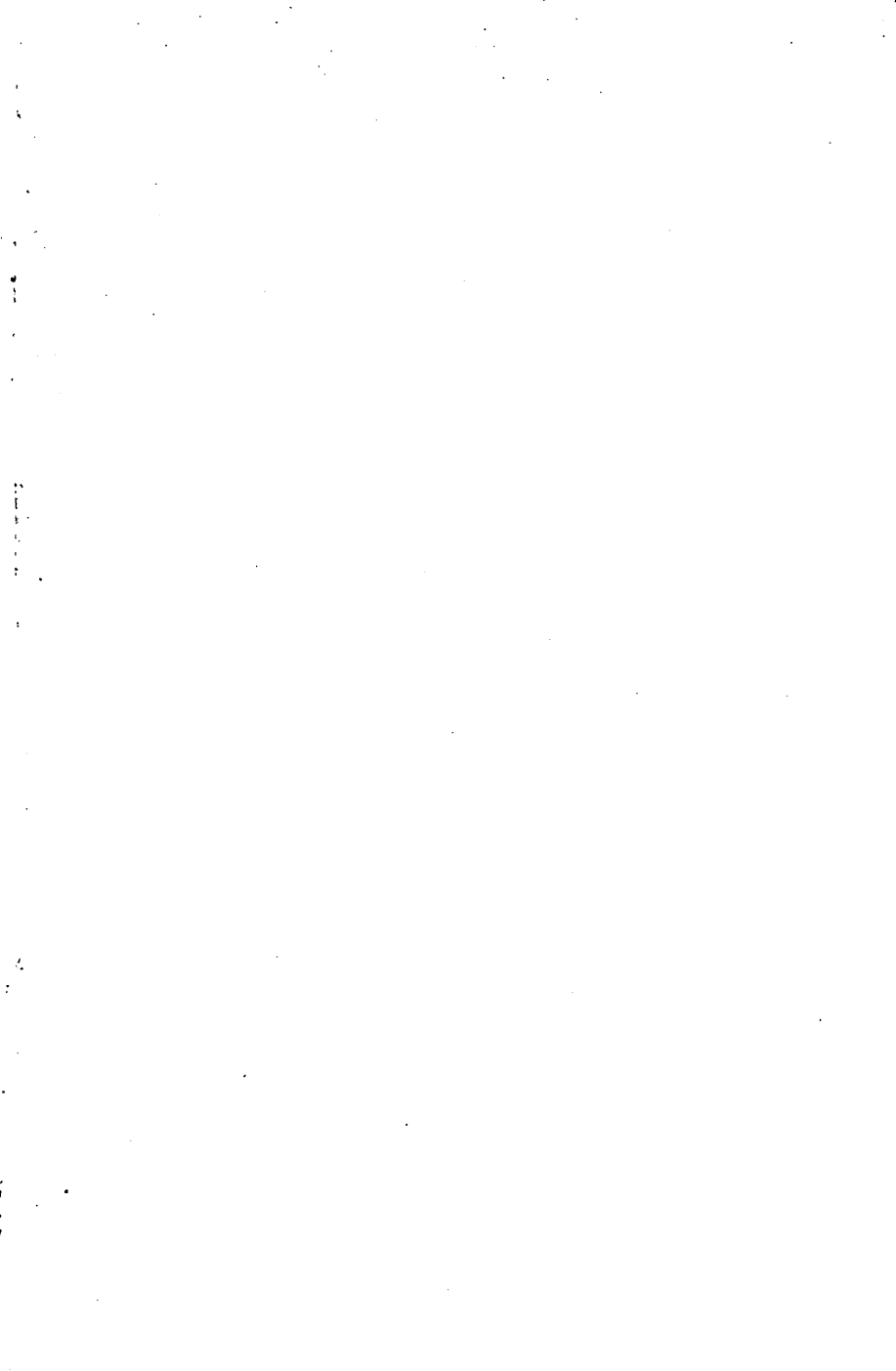
TO THE DISCOURAGED.

Whether the present be foul or fair,
It will be pleasant, sometime, somewhere.

THE LAST WORD.

*To the fairest woman I know:
To the sweetest I ever knew:
The best of my dreams were yours and, so,
Here's the best of my heart for you.*





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